

The Syntactic and Pragmatic Properties of A-not-A Question in Chinese

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts in Linguistics
in the
University of Canterbury
by
Clare Li

University of Canterbury

2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors. Dr Heidi Quinn, I would like to thank for her constant support, continued encouragement and insightful discussions as my senior supervisor throughout the project. She spent humungous hours in reading poorly written drafts and gave me valuable comments. Thanks also to my associate supervisor, Associate Professor Adam Lam, who gave me a lot of useful tips on the data sources for the project. I would also express my gratitude to the PhD students and fellow linguistics for supporting me. Darcy Rose and Sidney Wong did proofreading for my poor English. Moonsun (Angela) Choi gave me valuable feedback on every aspect of my research. Dan Jiao gave me useful information on Chinese. Jie (Frankie) Fang helped me a lot with Mandarin Chinese.

I would like to thank my friends, Ka-Wai Li and Jeff Lee, who listened to me when I needed to talk. Finally, I sincerely thank my family, for their support and for encouraging me to pursue my long academic journey.

Abstract

This thesis looks at the syntactic structure and pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions in spoken Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, and in written Chinese. The data analysed in this study comes from three films produced in Hong Kong which have audio in Cantonese and Mandarin, plus Chinese and English subtitles.

Four patterns of A-not-A questions are attested in my sample: A-not-A forms, A-not-AB forms, a-not-AB forms, a-not-A forms, where ‘A’ stands for the full form of the predicate, ‘a’ stands for the first syllable of a disyllabic predicate and ‘B’ stands for the complement. For all instances of disyllabic verbs (or adjectives, or adverbs) only the first syllable is pronounced in the affirmative and the full verb (or adjective, or adverb) in the negative counterpart. The patterns attested in this study can be captured in the modular approach proposed by J. Huang (2010) and R. Huang (2010). The forms of A-not-AB and a-not-AB questions are derived from a full coordinate structure via conjunction reduction to delete the identical complement in a backward direction. Then syllable reduction applies to A-not-AB forms to delete the second syllable of disyllabic predicates in the affirmative to yield a-not-AB forms. When A-not-A and a-not-A questions do not contain any complements, conjunction reduction does not apply. However, syllable reduction applies to A-not-A forms to delete the second syllable of disyllabic predicates in a backward direction to give a-not-A forms.

Cantonese A-not-A questions usually contain a sentence-final particle (such as 呀 *aa1*, 呀 *aa3*, 呢 *ni1*, 嚟 *gaa3*, 喇吓 *laa3haa2* and 㗎 *aa1naa4*) whereas most of Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese A-not-A questions do not contain sentence-final particles. The data also revealed morphological, lexical and grammatical differences between the Cantonese, Mandarin, and written Chinese versions, which influence the patterns of A-not-A questions.

My examination of the pragmatic functions of the A-not-A questions in the Cantonese version indicates that A-not-A questions can function as indirect speech acts and gambits as well as genuine question.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of Abbreviations	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	7
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	10
2.1 General Studies of A-not-A Questions in Chinese	10
2.2 Different Approaches to A-not-A Questions in Chinese	11
2.2.1 Forms of A-not-A Questions	11
2.2.2 Differences between Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese.....	12
2.2.3 The Base-generated Form of A-not-A Questions	18
2.2.4 One Rule Approach for A-not-A Questions	19
2.2.4.1 Forward Deletion.....	19
2.2.4.2 Backward Deletion	21
2.2.5 Modular Approach for A-not-A Questions.....	22
2.2.5.1 Conjunction Reduction	22
2.2.5.2 Anaphoric Ellipsis	24
2.2.5.3 Reduplication.....	26
2.2.5.4 Syllable Reduction.....	28
2.3 The pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions.....	32
2.3.1 Speech Acts – Searle’s Approach	33
2.3.2 Gambits	34
2.4 Alternative Ways of Asking Yes/No Questions.....	34
Chapter 3 Methodology	37
3.1 About the films.....	38
3.1.1 Ip Man.....	38
3.1.2 Ip Man 2.....	40
3.1.3 Ip Man 3.....	41
3.2 Data extractions and Analysis	42

Chapter 4	Results and Discussion	47
4.1	General Findings	47
4.1.1	A-not-A Questions	49
4.1.1.1	‘be-not-be’	52
4.1.1.2	有沒有 <i>you-mei-you</i> ‘have-not-have’	54
4.1.2	Tag Questions	56
4.2	Forms of A-not-A Questions	58
4.2.1	A-not-A Forms	59
4.2.2	A-not-AB Forms	59
4.2.3	a-not-AB Forms	61
4.2.4	a-not-A Forms	65
4.3	Differences between Cantonese, Mandarin and Written Chinese in A-not-A Questions	66
4.3.1	Lexical Differences	67
4.3.1.1	‘can’	67
4.3.1.2	‘be familiar with somebody or something’	68
4.3.1.3	‘ask someone to tell you a piece of information’	69
4.3.1.4	‘be here’	70
4.3.2	Grammatical Differences	71
4.3.2.1	Right dislocation	71
4.3.2.2	到 <i>dou2</i> ‘can’	72
4.3.2.3	‘need’	72
4.3.2.4	‘suitable + use’ or ‘enough + use’	74
4.3.3	A-not-A Questions with Sentence-Final Particles	75
4.4	Speech Acts and other Pragmatic Functions of A-not-A Questions	77
4.4.1	Expressive - Expressing concern	77
4.4.2	Directives	80
4.4.2.1	Challenging somebody	80

4.4.2.2	Suggestion –Trying to make addressee buy more	80
4.4.2.3	Request – Asking to speak to someone	81
4.4.3	Representatives - Expressing Speaker’s Assumption	82
4.4.4	A-not-A Questions as Gambits	84
4.4.4.1	Opening Gambits	84
4.4.4.2	Communication Control – Do you understand me?	84
Chapter 5	Conclusion	86
5.1	Summary	86
5.2	Limitations and Suggestions for future research	90
References	92

List of Abbreviations

ADV	adverbial marker
CONT	continuous aspect marker
CL	noun classifier
DEL	delimitative aspect
EXP	experiential aspect marker
LP	linking particle
PFV	perfective aspect marker
PL	plural
PRT	particle
Q	question particle
SFP	sentence final particle

Chapter 1 Introduction

The aims of this study are to examine the syntactic structure and to identify the pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions in Chinese. A-not-A questions are a type of yes/no question in Chinese that consist of an affirmative and negative counterpart as shown in (1).

- (1) Question: 你 食 唔 食 榴 槿 嗎 ?
nei5 sik6-m4-sik6 lau4lin4 gaa3
you eat-not-eat durian SFP
Cantonese
‘Do you eat durian?’
- Answer: 食 。 / 唔 食 。
sik6 m4 sik6
eat not eat
‘(I) eat (durian).’ / ‘(I) do not eat (durian).’

According to the existing literature (Lü 1985; J. Huang 1988, 2010; R. Huang 2010), there are four basic patterns of A-not-A questions: AB-not-AB (2a), AB-not-A (2b), A-not-AB (2c) and a-not-AB (2d). In these Mandarin examples, the verb 認得 *rende* ‘know’ is A and the complement 這個人 *zhe ge ren* ‘this man’ is B. These four A-not-A questions all have the same basic meaning and could be replaced with the 嗎 *ma* question in (2). Chinese grammars traditionally categorize A-not-A questions as a coordinate structure without a disjunctive coordinator and hence there are various existing works (Wang 1967; J. Hang 1988, 2010; Huang et al. 2009; R. Huang 2010) that compare the syntactic structure of A-not-A question with disjunctive questions (3).

- (2) a) **AB-not-AB form:**
- 你 認得 這 個 人 不 認得 這 個 人 ?
ni rende zhe ge ren bu rende zhe ge ren
you know this CL man not know this CL man
Mandarin
(Lü 1985:242)
- ‘Do you know this man?’

b) **AB-not-A form:**

你 認得 這 個 人 不 認得 ?
ni rende zhe ge ren bu rende
you know this CL man not know

Mandarin
(Lü 1985:242)

‘Do you know this man?’

c) **A-not-AB form:**

你 認得 不 認得 這 個 人 ?
ni rende bu rende zhe ge ren
you know not know this CL man

Mandarin
(Lü 1985:242)

‘Do you know this man?’

d) **a-not-AB form:**

你 認 不 認得 這 個 人 ?
ni ren bu rende zhe ge ren
you know not know this CL man

Mandarin
(Lü 1985:242)

‘Do you know this man?’

(3) **嗎 *ma* question:**

你 認得 這 個 人 嗎 ?
ni rende zhe ge ren ma
you know this CL man Q

Mandarin

‘Do you know this man?’

(4) **Disjunctive question:**

你 認得 這 個 人 還 是 不 認得 這 個 人 ?
ni rende zhe ge ren haishi bu rende zhe ge ren
you know this CL man or not know this CL man

Mandarin

‘Do you know this man?’

I consider the following questions in my study: How many types of A-not-A questions are used in Cantonese, Mandarin and written Chinese? Do they have different syntactic structures? Does the context affect which type of A-not-A questions a speaker chooses, i.e. what are the pragmatic functions of different types of A-not-A questions? What are the differences between Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese A-not-A questions? What are the alternatives to

A-not-A questions in Cantonese and Mandarin? What are the alternatives to (a) 係唔係 *hai6-m4-hai6* / 是不是 *shi-bu-shi* ‘be-not-be’ and (b) 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’? Do they have different syntactic structures?

My analysis is based on data from three films produced in Hong Kong which have dubbed in Cantonese and Mandarin, plus Chinese and English subtitles. I extracted all instances of A-not-A questions from the Cantonese and Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles, along with the corresponding sentence in other versions. I examined whether the A is monosyllabic or disyllabic and which pattern of A-not-A question is used in each version. I also considered the pragmatic function of the A-not-A questions in the Cantonese audio: is it a genuine question or does it serve another purpose?

The structure of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 reviews relevant information regarding A-not-A questions in Chinese. This review is followed by a discussion of previous studies on different approaches to A-not-A questions. The research questions are also presented. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this study. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussion. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing studies on A-not-A questions in Chinese and discusses the analysis of different forms of A-not-A questions in different approaches.

2.1 General Studies of A-not-A Questions in Chinese

A-not-A questions provide two options (i.e. affirmative and negative) for hearers to choose, therefore the traditional Chinese term for this type of questions is affirmative/negative questions (Lü 1985, Wu 1992, Shao 1996, Cheng and Tian 2005, Shao et al. 2010). According to Lü (1985) and Shao (1996), A-not-A questions can be derived from yes/no questions or special alternative questions. Lü (1985, p. 241) states that constituent questions and yes/no questions are the basic types of interrogative sentences in Chinese, while affirmative/negative questions and alternative questions are derived from yes/no questions. When two yes/no questions in (1) are coordinated, they can become affirmative/negative questions as shown in (2). In (2), the affirmative predicate 去 *qu* ‘go’ is combined with the negative counterpart 不去 *bu qu* ‘not go’ to form what we now call an A-not-A question. However, Shao (1996) argues that affirmative/negative questions are derived from special alternative questions which involve the disjunction of an affirmative predicate and its negative counterpart (3). In Shao’s analysis, the disjunctive coordinator 還是 *haishi* ‘or’ in (3) is deleted to form the affirmative/negative question shown in (4).

(1) Yes/No question:

你 去 ？ 你 不 去 ？
ni qu ni bu qu
you go you not-go

‘Will you go? Won’t you go?’

Mandarin
(Lü 1985:241)

(2) Affirmative/Negative question:

你 去 不 去 ？
ni qu bu qu
you go not go

‘Will you go (or) not go?’

Mandarin
(Lü 1985:241)

(3) Alternative question:

你 說 他 , 還 是 不 說 他 呢 ?
ni shuo ta haishi bu shuo ta ne
you say he or not say he SFP

‘Do you tell to him or don’t you tell to him?’

Mandarin
(Shao 1996:105)

(4) Affirmative/Negative question:

你 說 他 不 說 他 呢 ?
ni shuo ta bu shuo ta ne
you say he not say he SFP

‘Do you tell to him (or) not tell him?’

Mandarin
(Shao 1996:105)

2.2 Different Approaches to A-not-A Questions in Chinese

This section shows that A-not-A questions have three main forms, i.e. AB-not-AB, AB-not-A and A-not-AB. In the surface structure, the object may be present in both the affirmative and its negative counterpart, or the object may be absent from either the affirmative or its negative counterpart. In A-not-AB questions the full verb or adjective may be pronounced in the affirmative, or only the first syllable of the verb or adjective. In this section, I will discuss the approaches to different forms of A-not-A questions

2.2.1 Forms of A-not-A Questions

Lü (1985) points out that A-not-A questions can take the four different forms shown in (5). Example (5a) is of the form AB-not-AB (or VO-not-VO) because its affirmative is formed by the verb 認得 *rende* ‘know’ and the object 這個人 *zhe ge ren* ‘this man’, while the negative marker 不 *bu* ‘not’ with the entire VP 認得這個人 *rende zhe ge ren* ‘know this man’ forms its negative counterpart. The affirmative in (5b) is the same as in (5a), but the object in its negative counterpart is deleted, so (5b) is of the form AB-not-A. The negative in (5c) and (5d) is the same as in (5a), but the object in their affirmative counterpart is deleted, so (5c) and (5d) are of the form A-not-AB.

- (5) a) 你 認得 這 個 人 不 認得 這 個 人 ？
ni rende zhe ge ren bu rende zhe ge ren
 you know this CL man not know this CL man

‘Do you know this man?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:242)

- b) 你 認得 這 個 人 不 認得 _____ ？
ni rende zhe ge ren bu rende
 you know this CL man not know

‘Do you know this man?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:242)

- c) 你 認得 _____ 不 認得 這 個 人 ？
ni rende bu rende zhe ge ren
 you know not know this CL man

‘Do you know this man?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:242)

- d) 你 認 _____ 不 認得 這 個 人 ？
ni ren bu rende zhe ge ren
 you know not know this CL man

‘Do you know this man?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:242)

2.2.2 Differences between Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese

Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese both have the negative marker 不 *bu* (the Cantonese pronunciation being *bat1*) ‘not’, but Cantonese 不 *bat1* ‘not’ is heard in some fixed expressions, for example 不可思議 *bat1 ho2 si1ji2* ‘unthinkable’, or substituted for 唔 *m4* to give a literary quality, for example in Cantonese lyrics (Matthews and Yip 2011, p.283). As the lyrics need to achieve the quality of literature, so the negative prefix 唔 *m4* will be replaced by another negative prefix 不 *bat1*, for instance in (6) 不相近 *bat1soeng1gan6* ‘not-close’ instead of 唔相近 *m4soeng1gan6* ‘not-close’. There is another phrase 不可多得 *bat1ho2do1dak1* ‘rare’ with the negative prefix 不 *bat1* in (6) that is a fixed expression in Cantonese. Thus, only the negative marker 唔 *m4* ‘not’ is used to form A-not-A questions in Cantonese. For instance, (7a) and (7b) are typical A-not-A questions in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, respectively. Both of them have the same sentence structure and word order with the same meaning ‘Are they coming?’

(6) 如 兩 心 不 相 近 ...
jyu4 loeng5 sam1 bat1soeng1gan6
 if two heart not-close

不 可 多 得 ...
bat1ho2do1dak1
 rare

‘If two hearts have not become closer, ... rare ...’

Cantonese

(7) a) 佢哋 嚟 唔 嚟 ?
keoi5dei6 lai4 m4 lai4
 they come not come

‘Are they coming?’

Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:119(1))

b) 他們 來 不 來 ?
tamen lai bu lai
 they come not come

‘Are they coming?’

Mandarin
 (Shao et al. 2010:119(1))

On the other hand, the syllables of the verbs or adjectives might influence the forms of A-not-A questions in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese. When the predicate is a monosyllabic verb or adjective with an object, A-not-A questions in Cantonese commonly take the A-not-AB form but Mandarin Chinese speakers generally use the AB-not-A form. For instance, both of the predicates in (8) and (10) are monosyllabic verbs (返 *faan1* ‘return’ and 回 *hui* ‘return’) but the A-not-A questions take different forms in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese. In Cantonese, the object 屋企 *uk1kei2* ‘home’ generally follows the V-not-V sequence 返唔返 *faan1-m4-faan1* ‘return-not-return’ to form a question like (8), although Shao et al. (2010) point out that the AB-not-A forms are used by the old generation. In (9), the object 屋企 *uk1kei2* ‘home’ appears in-between the affirmative 返 *faan1* ‘return’ and its negative counterpart 唔返 *m4-faan1* ‘not-return’ to form an A-not-A question that is same of the form A-not-AB which is favoured in Mandarin Chinese as in (10).

- (8) 你 返 唔 返 屋企 ?
nei5 faan1 m4 faan1 uk1kei2
 you return not return home
 ‘Are you going home?’
 Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:120(3))
- (9) 你 返 屋企 唔 返 ?
nei5 faan1 uk1kei2 m4 faan1
 you return home not return
 ‘Are you going home?’
 Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:120(3'))
- (10) 你 回 家 不 回 ?
ni hui jia bu hui
 you return home not return
 ‘Are you going home?’
 Mandarin
 (Shao et al. 2010:120(3))

When the verbs or adjectives are disyllabic, Cantonese speakers usually pronounce the first syllable of the full verbs in the affirmative and use the A-not-AB forms. In (11a), only the first syllable 鍾 *zung1* of the Cantonese disyllabic verb 鍾意 *zung1ji3* ‘like’ is pronounced in the affirmative. In Mandarin Chinese, the disyllabic verb 喜歡 *xihuan* ‘like’ is still pronounced in full in the affirmative as well as its negative counterpart. AB-not-A forms and A-not-AB forms can both be used to realise A-not-A questions in Mandarin Chinese like (12a) and (12b) respectively. Cantonese speakers cannot use the AB-not-A forms at all. For instance, the native Cantonese speakers do not use the AB-not-A forms like (11b) gives the same syntactic structure with Mandarin Chinese like (12a) but (11b) is ungrammatical to the native Cantonese speakers.

- (11) a) 你 鍾 唔 鍾意 佢 ?
nei5 zung1 m4 zung1ji3 keoi5
 you like not like she
 ‘Do you like her?’
 Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(11))
- b) *你 鍾意 佢 唔 鍾意 ?
nei5 zung1ji3 keoi5 m4 zung1ji3
 you like she not like
 Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(11'))

- (12) a) 你 喜歡 她 不 喜歡 ?
 ni xihuan ta bu xihuan
 you like she not like

‘Do you like her?’

Mandarin
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(11))

- b) 你 喜歡 不 喜歡 她 ?
 ni xihuan bu xihuan ta
 you like not like she

‘Do you like her?’

Mandarin
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(11))

The negative markers in Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese, besides 不 *bu* ‘not’ and 唔 *m4* ‘not’, are 沒(有) *mei(you)* ‘not (have)’, 冇 *mou5* ‘not have’ and 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ in the respective varieties. The negative markers 冇 *mou5* ‘not have’ and 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ are not in Mandarin for A-not-A constructions. Lü (1985) mentions that 不 *bu* ‘not’ and 沒 *mei* ‘not’ appear similar sentence structures as shown in (5b)-(5d). Example (13a) is of the form AB-not-AB because its affirmative is formed by the verb 見着 *jianzhe* ‘saw’ and the object 他 *ta* ‘he’, while the negative marker 沒(有) *mei(you)* ‘not (have)’ with the entire VP 見着他 *jianzhe ta* ‘saw he (him)’ forms its negative counterpart. The affirmative in (13b) is the same as in (13a), but the object in its negative counterpart is omitted, so the sentence structure of (13b) is similar to example (5b) to form an AB-not-A question. The negative in (13c) and (13d) is the same as in (13a), but the object in their affirmative counterpart is omitted. Again, compare the sentence structure of (13c)-(13d) with (5c)-(5d) and it shows that (13c) and (13d) are similar to (5c) and (5d) to form an A-not-AB question. Although both of them express negation, they do not occupy the same syntactic position. 沒 *mei* ‘not’ is a verb that is used to negate the existence of experience, but 不 *bu* ‘not’ is an adverb that is used for simple negation (Lü 1985, Liing 2014). Comparing the omitted part in (5b)-(5d) with (13b)-(13d), it shows that only the NP 這個人 *zhe ge ren* ‘this man’ in (5b)-(5d) is omitted in either of the AB-not-A or A-not-AB forms. But the entire VP 見着他 *jianzhe ta* ‘saw he (him)’ is omitted in (13b) of the form AB-not-A. In addition, only (13b) requires 沒有 *meiyou* ‘not have’ in its negative counterpart if you compare the AB-not-AB question (13a) and the A-not-AB questions (13c)-(13d).

- (13) a) 你 見着 他 沒(有) 見着 他 ?
ni jian-zhe ta mei(you) jian-zhe ta
 you see-CONT he not (have) see-CONT he

‘Did you see him?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:243)

- b) 你 見着 他 沒 有 _____ ?
ni jian-zhe ta meiyou
 you see-CONT he not have

‘Did you see him?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:243)

- c) 你 見着 _____ 沒(有) 見着 他 ?
ni jian-zhe mei(you) jian-zhe ta
 you see-CONT not (have) see-CONT he

‘Did you see him?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:243)

- d) 你 見 _____ 沒(有) 見着 他 ?
ni jian mei(you) jian-zhe ta
 you see not (have) see-CONT he

‘Did you see him?’

Mandarin
 (Lü 1985:243)

Mandarin Chinese 沒(有) *mei(you)* ‘not (have)’ corresponds to 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’ and 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ in Cantonese. When native Cantonese speakers ask whether something has happened or not, they generally use 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ or 冇冇 *jau5-mou3* ‘have-not-have’ (i.e. the combination of the negative marker 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’ and its affirmative 有 *jau5* ‘have’) to form the yes/no questions. The negative marker 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ generally follows the declarative sentence to form the question that is asking whether something has already happened. The main verb usually takes an aspect marker such as perfective 咗 *zo2* or experiential 過 *gwo3*. For instance, the negative maker 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ follows the declarative clause 你食咗飯 *nei5 sik6-zo2 faan6* ‘you have eaten’ to form question (14) that concerns the present situation. Similarly, question (15) concerns the past experience when the negative maker 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ follows the declarative clause 你食過海南雞飯 *nei5 sik6-gwo3 hoi2naam4-gai1-faan6* ‘you have ever eaten Hainan chicken rice’. Verbal particles such as 好 *hou2*, 完 *jyun4*, 晒 *saai3* additionally indicate completion or accomplishment in the declarative sentence, and hence, the question (16) is concerned with the completion of cooking. (14)-(16) are known as perfective questions (cf. Matthews and Yip 2011, p. 363).

- (14) 你 食 咗 飯 未 呀 ?
nei5 sik6-zo2 faan6 mei6 aa3
 you eat-PFV food not.yet SFP

‘Have you eaten yet?’

Cantonese
 (Matthews and Yip
 2011:362)

- (15) 你 食 過 海南 雞 飯 未 呀 ?
nei5 sik6-gwo3 hoi2naam4-gai1-faan6 mei6 aa3
 you eat-EXP Hainan-chicken-rice not.yet SFP

‘Have you ever eaten Hainan chicken rice?’

Cantonese
 (Matthews and Yip
 2011:362)

- (16) 你 煮 好 飯 未 呀 ?
nei5 zyu2-hou2 faan6 mei6 aa3
 you cook-PRT food not.yet SFP

‘Have you finished cooking?’

Cantonese
 (Matthews and Yip
 2011:362)

On the other hand, 有冇 *jau5-mou3* ‘have-not-have’¹ always precedes the VP and cannot occur with the perfective aspect marker 咗 *zo2*. For instance, the VP 見過佢 *gin3-gwo3 keoi5* ‘saw him’ follows 有冇 *jau5-mou3* ‘have-not-have’ as shown in (17a) to form a question that is asking whether you saw him or not these few years. This type of question is referred to as an existential question (cf. Matthews and Yip 2011, p. 365). Although 有冇 *jau5-mou3* ‘have-not-have’ takes the A-not-A form² of the existential word 有 *jau5* ‘have’, existential questions have a complex sentence structure. Examples (17a) and (17b) are the corresponding questions in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese respectively but the sentence structures are different. The Mandarin Chinese VP 見過他 *jian-guo ta* ‘saw him’ appears in the A-not-AB form 見沒見過他 *jian mei jian-guo ta* ‘saw-notsaw him’ in (17b), but the Cantonese VP 見過佢 *gin3-gwo3 keoi5* ‘saw him’ cannot. The verb 見 *gin3* ‘see’ cannot precede the fixed combination 有冇 *jau5-mou3* ‘have-not-have’ whereas 見 *jian* ‘see’ can come before 沒 *mei* ‘not’. Example (17a) is a more complicated A-not-A question than (17b). Therefore, existential questions in Cantonese will not be discussed any further in this paper.

¹ In this chapter, the glossing of 有冇 *jau5-mou3* is followed by Matthew and Yip (2011). However, the form of 有冇 *jau5-mou3* really is ‘have-have.not’, i.e. ‘A-not’ because 有 *jau5* ‘have’ is not repeated. So I have glossed 有冇 *jau5-mou3* as ‘have-have.not’ in the rest of this study.

² The form of 有冇 *jau5-mou3* really is ‘have-have.not’, i.e. ‘A-not’ because 有 *jau5* ‘have’ is not repeated.

- (17) a) 呢 幾 年 你 有冇 見過 佢 ?
ni1 gei2 nin4 nei5 jau5-mou5 gin3-gwo3 keoi5
 this few year you have-not.have see-EXP he

‘Did you see him these few years?’

Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(16))

- b) 這 幾 年 你 見 沒 見過 他 ?
zhe i3 nian ni jian mei jian-guo ta
 this few year you see not see-EXP he

‘Did you see him these few years?’

Mandarin
 (Shao et al. 2010:121(16))

2.2.3 The Base-generated Form of A-not-A Questions

J. Huang (1988, 2010) argues that the formation of A-not-A questions is the result of deletion of identical elements from a full coordinate structure like (18a). When the disjunctive coordinator 還是 *haishi* ‘or’ contains in (18a), this will yield the disjunctive question. If the disjunctive coordinator 還是 *haishi* ‘or’ is deleted, the result is an A-not-A question. The full VP 喜歡這本書 *xihuan zhe-ben shu* ‘like this book’ appears not only in the affirmative in (18a), but also in its negative counterpart. As example (18a) is cumbersome, it can have further deletion of identical elements (i.e. the object) to form different forms of A-not-A questions or disjunctive questions like (18b)-(18c). Example (18b) is the AB-not-A form or VP-or-not-V, while example (18c) is the A-not-AB form or V-or-not-VP.

- (18) a) 你 喜歡 這 本 書 還是 /Ø³ 不 喜歡 這 本 書 ?
ni xihuan zhe ben shu haishi bu xihuan zhe ben shu
 you like this-CL book or not like this-CL book

‘Do you like this book or/(or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:48(75a))

- b) 你 喜歡 這 本 書 還是 /Ø 不 喜歡 _____ ?
ni xihuan zhe ben shu haishi bu xihuan
 you like this-CL book or not like

‘Do you like this book or/(or) not like (this book)?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:48(75b))

³ Ø: the disjunctive coordinator is omitted.

- c) 你 喜歡 _____ 還是 / Ø 不 喜歡 這 本 書 ?
ni xihuan haishi bu xihuan zhe ben shu
 you like or not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) or/(or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:48(75c))

2.2.4 One Rule Approach for A-not-A Questions

As A-not-A questions are comparable to the disjunctive questions, some scholars argue that the different forms can all be captured with a single analysis, i.e. a single deletion rule with bi-directional application to the base-generated A-not-A questions like (18a).

2.2.4.1 Forward Deletion

Forward deletion is a common suggestion for the analysis of AB-not-A forms in Chinese (Wang 1967, Wu 1992). In this analysis, the AB-not-A question in (21) is formed by conjoining the affirmative 要買書 *yao mai shu* ‘want to buy books’ (19) and the negative 不要買書 *bu yao mai shu* ‘not want to buy books’ (20). Both of them share the VP 買書 *mai shu* ‘buy books’ which is then deleted from the negative in (21). This is called forward deletion.

- (19) 你 要 買 書 。
ni yao mai shu
 you want buy book

‘You want to buy books.’

Mandarin
 (Wang 1967:226)

- (20) 你 不 要 買 書 。
ni bu yao mai shu
 you not want buy book

‘You don’t want to buy books.’

Mandarin
 (Wang 1967:226)

- (21) 你 要 買 書 不 要 (買 書) ?
ni yao mai shu bu yao (mai shu)
 you want buy book not want (buy book)

‘Do you want to buy books?’

Mandarin

Wu (1992, p. 81) points out that the forward deletion can delete as in the following situations. Firstly, the whole VP is deleted but the negative marker 不 *bu* ‘not’ or 沒有 *meiyou* ‘not have’ is kept in the negative counterpart like (22). The negative counterpart in (22) only has the negative marker 不 *bu* ‘not’ because the VP 願意去北京 *yuanyi qu beijing* ‘be willing to go to Beijing’ is deleted. Another option is that both the negative marker and the verb are retained, but the object or the complement is deleted. For instance, the NP 飯 *fan* ‘meal’ is deleted in (23) but the preceding negative marker 沒 *mei* ‘not’ with the verb 吃 *chi* ‘eat’ is retained. Similarly, only the complement 出來 *chu lai* ‘come out’ is deleted in the negative of (24).

- (22) 你 願意 去 北京 不？
ni yuanyi qu beijing bu
 you want go Beijing not

‘Are you willing to go to Beijing?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(41))

- (23) 你 吃 飯 沒 吃 (飯) ？
ni chi fan mei chi (fan)
 you eat meal not eat (meal)

‘Have you eaten yet?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(42))

- (24) 你 拿 出來 不 拿 (出來) ？
ni na chu lai bu na (chu lai)
 you take out come not take (out come)

‘Do you bring it out?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(45))

When the VP contains a modal verb, the negative counterpart will retain both the negative marker 不 *bu* ‘not’ and the modal verb. In (25), the word 休息 *xiuxi* ‘rest’ is deleted after the negation 不應該 *bu yinggai* ‘not should’. If the VP involves serial verbs, then the first verb is kept in the negative. For instance, the VP in (26) is a serial verb construction which contains two verbs 去 *qu* ‘go’ and 買 *mai* ‘buy’. So the first verb 去 *qu* ‘go’ is retained and the rest is deleted.

- (25) 他 應該 休息 不 應該 (休息) ?
ta yinggai xiuxi bu yinggai (xiuxi)
 he should rest not should (rest)

‘Should he take rest?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(47))

- (26) 你 去 買 菜 不 去 (買 菜) ?
ni qu mai cai bu qu (mai cai)
 you go buy food not go (buy food)

‘Do you go to buy food?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(48))

2.2.4.2 Backward Deletion

If we assume that the A-not-A question (27) is formed by conjoining the affirmative 要買書 *yao mai shu* ‘want to buy books’ (19) and the negative 不要買書 *bu yao mai shu* ‘not want to buy books’ (20), then the VP 買書 *mai shu* ‘buy books’ could also be deleted from the affirmative in (27). This is called backward deletion.

- (27) 你 要 (買 書) 不 要 買 書 ?
ni yao (mai shu) bu yao mai shu
 you want (buy book) not want buy book

‘Do you want to buy books?’

Mandarin

Moreover, all of the situations discussed in the forward deletion also apply to backward deletion. For instance, if the NP 飯 *fan* ‘meal’ is deleted in the affirmative in (23) instead of its negative counterpart, then the A-not-A question will take the A-not-AB form in (28). Similarly, the complement 出來 *chu lai* ‘come out’ is deleted in the affirmative in (24) instead of its negative counterpart then the A-not-A question becomes (29).

- (28) 你 吃 (飯) 沒 吃 飯 ?
ni chi (fan) mei chi fan
 you eat (meal) not eat meal

‘Have you eaten yet?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(51))

- (29) 你 拿 (出來) 不 拿 出 來 ?
 ni na (chu lai) bu na chu lai
 you take (out come) not take out come

‘Do you bring it out?’

Mandarin
 (Wu 1992:81(54))

2.2.5 Modular Approach for A-not-A Questions

The single deletion rule seems to capture the syntactic structure of the different possible realisations of A-not-A questions in Chinese, however, backward deletion cannot account for A-not-AB forms like (43) (J. Huang 1988, 2010; R. Huang 2010). In (30) only the first syllable 喜 *xi* ‘li-(ke)’ of the verb 喜歡 *xihuan* ‘like’ is pronounced in the affirmative. Such A-not-A questions are referred to as a-not-aB forms.

- (30) 你 喜 不 喜 歡 這 本 書 ?
 ni xi bu xihuan zhe ben shu
 you li-not-like this-CL book

‘Do you like this book?’

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:112(22a))

J. Huang (1988, 2010) therefore proposes that AB-not-A forms of A-not-A questions are derived from the AB-not-AB forms via anaphoric ellipsis whereas A-not-AB (and a-not-aB) forms are derived from a simplex deep structure via reduplication. Although R. Huang (2010) agrees with J. Huang (1988, 2010), he argues that A-not-AB forms are also derived from the coordinate AB-not-AB structures via conjunction reduction. So R. Huang proposes that a-not-AB forms like (30) involve conjunction reduction followed by syllable reduction.

2.2.5.1 Conjunction Reduction

Conjunction reduction is a rule that deletes an identical constituent from the edge of a conjunct in coordinate sentences. It has to obey the directionality constraint. For instance, in (31) the identical constituent 這本書 *zhe-ben shu* ‘this book’ (i.e. DP) occupies a right peripheral position. So therefore, conjunction reduction applies to the coordinate AB-not-AB structure (31a) to delete the identical DP 這本書 *zhe-ben shu* ‘this book’ in the backward direction to give an A-not-AB form (31b). Huang et al. (2009, p.251) use the disjunctive questions (i.e. *haishi*-questions, refer to section 2.2.3 on *haishi*-questions) to explain how conjunction reduction obeys the directionality constraint. Example (32a) is the full

coordinated structure of a disjunctive question. Conjunction reduction applies to example (32a) in the forward direction because the identical subject NPs 張三 *Zhangsan* ‘Zhangsan’ occur on a left branch of a tree. Therefore, forward deletion of 張三 *Zhangsan* ‘Zhangsan’ is applied in the second conjunct to give (32b). The identical object NPs 書 *shu* ‘book’ occur on the right branch of a tree so conjunction reduction applies to (32b) in the backward direction and deletes the NP 書 *shu* ‘book’ in the initial conjunct to give (32c). These two examples illustrate that conjunction reduction is governed by a directionality constraint. In other words, the conjunction reduction is restricted by the right branch of a tree. In (32d), the identical subject 張三 *Zhangsan* ‘Zhangsan’ occurs on the left branch of a tree and in keeping with the directionality constraint conjunction reduction applies in a forward direction. However, the deleted identical subject 書 *shu* ‘book’ occur on the right branch of a tree, and thus the deletion of the identical subject 書 *shu* ‘book’ in a forward direction does not obey the directionality constraint which would require the deletion to go backward. Hence, conjunction reduction cannot explain how the second NP 書 *shu* ‘book’ in (32d) is deleted.

- (31) a) 你 喜歡 這 本 書 還是/∅ 不 喜歡 這 本 書 ?
ni xihuan zhe-ben shu haishi bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you like this-CL book or not like this-CL book

‘Do you like this book or/(or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:160(17a))

- b) 你 喜歡 _____ 還是/∅ 不 喜歡 這 本 書 ?
ni xihuan _____ haishi bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you like or not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) or/(or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:160(17c))

- (32) a) 張三 買 書 還是 張三 不 買 書 ?
Zhangsan mai shu haishi Zhangsan bu mai shu
 Zhangsan buy book or Zhangsan not buy book

‘Does Zhangsan buy books or doesn’t he buy books?’

Mandarin
 (Huang et al. 2009:250(43a))

- b) 張三 買 書 還是 _____ 不 買 書 ?
Zhangsan mai shu haishi _____ bu mai shu
 Zhangsan buy book or not buy book

‘Does Zhangsan buy books or not buy books?’

Mandarin
 (Huang et al. 2009:250(43b))

- c) 張三 買 ____ 還是 ____ 不 買 書 ？
Zhangsan mai haishi bu mai shu
 Zhangsan buy or not buy book

‘Does Zhangsan buy books or not buy books?’

Mandarin
 (Huang et al. 2009:250(43c))

- d) 張三 買 書 還是 ____ 不 買 ____ ？
Zhangsan mai shu haishi bu mai
 Zhangsan buy book or not buy

‘Does Zhangsan buy books or not buy [them]?’

Mandarin
 (Huang et al. 2009:250(43d))

2.2.5.2 Anaphoric Ellipsis

As discussed above, the deletion of the identical object 書 *shu* ‘book’ in the second conjunct of (32d) violates the directionality constraint. However, anaphoric ellipsis is not governed by the directionality constraint. Anaphoric ellipsis is a phonetic process that deletes the second occurrence of a constituent on a right-peripheral position (J. Huang 2010, p.118f). Hence, J. Huang (1988, 2010) and R. Huang (2010) argue that the AB-not-A forms of A-not-A questions are derived from the AB-not-AB type via anaphoric ellipsis.

J. Huang (2010) points out that anaphoric ellipsis has to obey lexical integrity. The lexical integrity hypothesis states that ‘phrase-level rules belonging to the syntactic component cannot affect a proper sub-part of a lexical category (word)’ (p.111). For instance, the word 車 *che* ‘car’ is the identical elements in (33a). Conjunction reduction theoretically allows us to delete the first instance of 車 *che* ‘car’ in a backward direction to give (33b). Anaphoric ellipsis cannot apply to delete the second existing word 車 *che* ‘car’ to give (33c). However, (33b) and (33c) are both ungrammatical. In Chinese, 火車 *huoche* ‘train’ and 汽車 *qiche* ‘automobile’ are compound nouns and cannot be separated.

- (33) a) 我 喜歡 火 車 跟 汽 車
 wo xihuan huo-che gen qi-che
 I like fire-car and gas-car

‘I like trains and automobiles.’

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:111(19a))

- b) *我 喜歡 火 — 跟 汽車
 wo xihuan huo- gen qi-che
 I like fire- and gas-car

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:111(19b))

- c) *我 喜歡 火車 跟 汽 —
 wo xihuan huo-che gen qi-
 I like fire-car and gas-

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:111(19c))

J. Huang (2010, cf. p.112) also points out that anaphoric ellipsis has to obey the prohibition against preposition stranding in Chinese. For instance, (34) contains the preposition 跟 *gen* ‘with’. The NP 李四 *Lisi* ‘Lisi’ follows the preposition 跟 *gen* ‘with’ in the question. If the NP is omitted after the preposition 跟 *gen* ‘with’, then the resulting sentence (我沒有跟打架 *wo meiyou gen dajia* ‘I didn’t fight with’) is ungrammatical.

- (34) Q: 你 跟 李四 打架了 嗎 ?
 ni gen Lisi dajia-le ma
 you with Lisi fight-PFV SFP

‘Did you fight with Lisi?’

- A: 沒有 , 我 沒有 跟 *(他) 打架 。
 meiyou , wo meiyou gen *(ta) dajia
 no I not with *(him) fight

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:113(26))

‘No, I didn’t fight with *(him).’

In (35), omitting the second part of the verb 興 *xing* in the negative violates the lexical integrity hypothesis. In (36), the deletion of the NP 他 *ta* ‘he’ after the preposition 跟 *gen* ‘with’ in the negative violates the prohibition against preposition stranding. The well-formed AB-not-A forms of A-not-A questions (37) and the disjunctive question (32d) are derived via anaphoric ellipsis that has not violated the lexical integrity hypothesis or the prohibition against preposition stranding.

- (35) *你 高興 不 高__ ?
ni gaoxing bu gao-
 you happy not hap-
 Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:112(23b))
- (36) *你 跟 他 說 話 不 跟 ?
ni gen ta shuo hua bu gen
 you with he say words not with
 Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:113(27b))
- (37) 你 喜歡 這 本 書 還 是/∅ 不 喜 歡 _____ ?
ni xihuan zhe-ben shu haishi bu xihuan
 you like this-CL book or not like
 Mandarin
 ‘Do you like this book or/(or) not like (this book)?’
 (R. Huang 2010:160(17b))

2.2.5.3 Reduplication

Chinese has many disyllabic verbs such as 喜歡 *xihuan* ‘like’, 高興 *gaoxing* ‘happy’, etc., however, in the case of these two examples, both syllables are required to express the full meaning of these verbs. As the lexical integrity hypothesis, J. Huang (1988, 2010) proposes that the A-not-AB forms are derived from a simplex deep structure via reduplication. J. Huang also argues that the A-not-AB type of A-not-A questions is comparable to *wh*-questions like (38)-(39). The *wh*-phrases in Chinese are in situ. In (38) and (39), an NP constituent and an adverbial constituent with the [+Q] feature are realized as the *wh*-phrases 誰 *shei* ‘who’ and 為什麼 *weishenme* ‘why’, respectively. Similarly, J. Huang assumes that A-not-AB questions contain an INFL head with a [+Q] feature which is phonologically realized by a reduplication rule that reduplicates a sequence instantly following INFL and inserts the negative morpheme 不 *bu* ‘not’ between the original and its reduplicant, as shown in Figure 2.1. In Figure 2.1, the formation of an INFL constituent is based on the simplex sentence 你喜歡這本書 *ni xihuan zhe ben shu* ‘you like this book’. The verb 喜歡 *xihuan* ‘like’ can be reduplicated in full before the negative morpheme 不 *bu* ‘not’ to give 喜歡不喜歡 *xihuan bu xihuan* ‘like not like’ or only the first syllable is reduplicated to give 喜不喜歡 *xi bu xihuan* ‘like not like’. According to this approach, J. Huang points out that a [+Q] feature in INFL will trigger the reduplication of the first syllable 高 *gao* ‘hap-’ of the verb 高興 *gaoxing* ‘happy’ in (40) and the negative morpheme 不 *bu* ‘not’ is inserted between the original and its reduplicant to form 高不高興 *gao-bugaoxing* ‘hap-not-happy’.

- (38) 誰 來 了 ?
shei lai le
 who come PFV

‘Who came?’

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:117(45))

- (39) 張三 為什麼 沒有 來 ?
Zhangsan weishenme meiyou lai
 Zhangsan why did-not come

‘Why didn’t Zhangsan come?’

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:117(46))

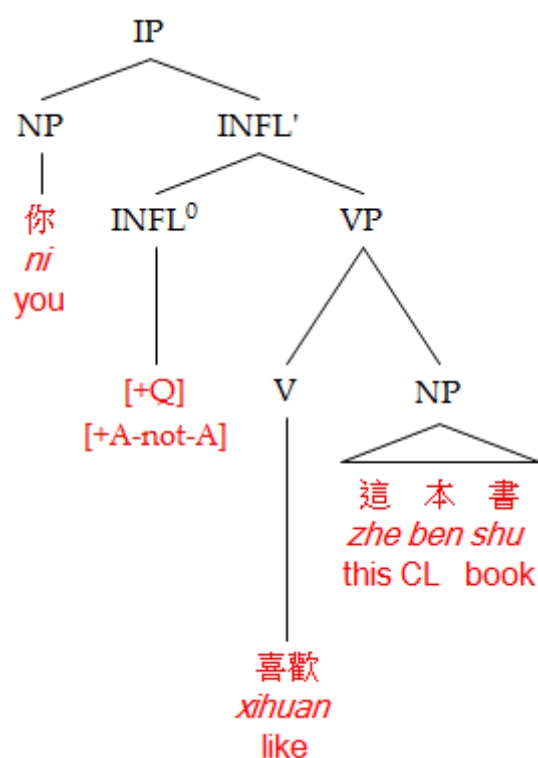


Figure 2.1 The syntactic structure for the form of A-not-AB (cf. J. Huang 2010:117(44), Huang et al. 2009:253(69))

- (40) 你 高 不 高興 ?
ni gao-bu-gaoxing
 you hap-not-happy

‘Are you happy or not?’

Mandarin
 (J. Huang 2010:112(23a))

2.2.5.4 Syllable Reduction

Dai (1990) disagrees with J. Huang's (1988, 2010) use of the lexical integrity hypothesis and preposition stranding to argue for a phonological analysis of A-not-AB questions where an INFL constituent with a [+Q] feature is phonologically realized by a reduplication rule. Dai argues that the A-not-AB form is constrained by a bisyllabification rhythm rule, and he uses a prosodic domain formation rule to demonstrate that A-not-AB forms may not violate lexical integrity and the prohibition against preposition stranding. Dai's prosodic domain formation rule is constrained by (41)-(44) (cf. Dai 1990, p. 297).

- (41) Prosodic domains begin at the edge of syntactic phrases.
- (42) Binary feet are formed from left to right if the morphosyntactic structure is flat.
- (43) Bisyllabicity is realized at the left edge of certain domains.
- (44) Binary foot formation is subject to lexical integrity.

The steps of the prosodic domain formation rule are given below (cf. Dai 1990, p. 298 (15)):

- Step 1: Form binary feet according to morphosyntactic binary branchings.
- Step 2: Form binary feet from left to right for the remaining syllables.
- Step 3: Join any leftover monosyllable to the neighboring foot according to the direction of the morphosyntactic branching.

According to J. Huang (1988), (45) 喜不喜歡 *xi bu xihuan* 'like not like' does not violate lexical integrity but (46) *喜還是不喜歡 *xi haishi bu xihuan* 'like or not like' violates lexical integrity. Dai (1990, p.299f) analyses these sequences as follows: In (46), 喜 *xi* 'like' is not part of the word 還是 *haishi* 'or'. If 喜 *xi* 'like' attaches to the disjunctive coordinator 還是 *haishi* 'or' as a bound form, it will violate lexical integrity. The trisyllabic foot 喜還是 *xi haishi* 'like or' goes against the rhythm rule because it is located leftmost in the domain. In other words, the syllable 喜 *xi* 'like' is not phonologically attached to the disjunctive coordinator 還是 *haishi* 'or'. On the other hand, in (45), 喜 *xi* 'like' and 不 *bu* are both monosyllabic. When they join together to become a bisyllabic foot, it fits in with the rhythm laws. If a silent (i.e. phonologically empty) beat is inserted in-between 喜 *xi* 'like' and 還是 *haishi* 'or', then 喜 *xi* 'like' does not join to 還是 *haishi* 'or' and obeys lexical integrity as shown in (47). This is because a phonologically empty slot is inserted on a right branch of 喜

xi ‘like’ to form a compound binary foot at the left edge. So, the ungrammaticality of (46) is not due to syntactic ill-formedness but phonological ill-formedness.

- (45) 喜 不 喜歡
 xi bu xihuan
 like not like
- Mandarin
 (cf. Dai 1990: 299 (17a))
- ‘like not like’

Step 1: 喜 不 [喜歡]
 xi bu [xihuan]
 like not like

Step 2: [喜 不] [喜歡]
 [*xi bu*] [*xihuan*]
 like not like

Step 3: Not applicable

- (46) *喜還是不喜歡
 xi haishi bu xihuan
 like or not like
- Mandarin
 (cf. Dai 1990: 299 (17c))
- ‘like or not like’

Step 1: 喜 [還是] 不 [喜歡]
 xi [haishi] bu [xihuan]
 like or not like

Step 2: Not applicable

Step 3: *[喜 [還是]] [不 [喜歡]]
 [*xi [haishi]*] [*bu [xihuan]*]
 like or not like

- (47) 喜 (a silent beat) 還是 不 喜歡
 xi (a silent beat) haishi bu xihuan
 like or not like
- Mandarin
- ‘like or not like’

Step 1: [喜 (a silent beat)] [還是] 不 [喜歡]
 [*xi (a silent beat)*] [*haishi*] *bu [xihuan]*
 like or not like

Step 2: Not applicable

Step 3: [喜 (a silent beat)] [還是] [不 [喜歡]]
[xi (a silent beat)] [haishi] [bu [xihuan]]
like or not like

Wu (1992) and R. Huang (2010) propose that a-not-aB forms of A-not-A questions undergo a similar syllable reduction to (48b) and also have to obey the directionality constraint. Examples (48a) and (49a) both are the original phrases. The identical word 學 *xue* ‘school’ occupies on a right position in (48a), therefore, the word 學 *xue* ‘school’ is deleted in the first existing phrase to give (48b). If the identical word 學 *xue* ‘school’ is deleted in the forward direction like (48c), then it is against the directionality constraint to provide an ill-formed phrase in Chinese. Similarly, the identical word 國 *guo* ‘nation’ occupies on the left position in (49a), therefore, the word 國 *guo* ‘nation’ is deleted in the second existing phrase to give (49b). If the identical word 國 *guo* ‘nation’ is deleted in the backward direction like (49c), then it is against the directionality constraint.

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| (48) | a) | <p>中 學 小 學</p> <p><i>zhong-xue</i> <i>xiao-xue</i></p> <p>medium-school small-school</p> | | | |
| | | ‘high school (and) elementary school’ | | | Mandarin
(R. Huang 2010:171(45a)) |
| | b) | <p>中 — 小 學</p> <p><i>zhong-</i> <i>xiao-xue</i></p> <p>medium- small-school</p> | | | |
| | | ‘high school (and) elementary school’ | | | Mandarin
(R. Huang 2010:171(45b)) |
| | c) | <p>* 中 學 小 —</p> <p><i>zhong-xue</i> <i>xiao-</i></p> <p>medium-school small-</p> | | | |
| | | | | | Mandarin
(R. Huang 2010:171(45c)) |
| (49) | a) | <p>國 中 國 小</p> <p><i>guo-zhong</i> <i>guo-xue</i></p> <p>nation-medium nation-small</p> | | | |
| | | ‘high school (and) elementary school’ | | | Mandarin
(R. Huang 2010:171(46a)) |

- b) 國 中 ____ 小
 guo-zhong *-xue*
 nation-medium -small

‘high school (and) elementary school’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:171(46b))

- c) * ____ 中 國 小
 -zhong *guo-xue*
 -medium nation-small

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:171(46c))

In addition, R. Huang (2010, p.185f) proposes that syllable reduction is followed by the conjunction reduction as shown in (50). Example (50b) is derived from AB-not-AB form (50a) via conjunction reduction to delete the identical DP 這本書 *zhe-ben shu* ‘this book’ to give the base of A-not-AB forms like (50b’). Again, the syllable reduction is applied in (50c) to delete the second syllable 歡 *huan* in the affirmative 喜歡 *xihuan* ‘happy’. Then the base of A-not-AB forms become as a-not-aB forms like (50c’).

- (50) a) 你 [喜歡 這 本 書] [不 喜歡 這 本 書]?
 ni xihuan zhe-ben shu bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you like this-CL book not like this-CL book

‘Do you like this book (or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:186(75a))

- b) 你 [喜歡 _____] [不 喜歡 這 本 書]?
 ni xihuan bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you like not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) (or) not like this book?’

Mandarin
 (R. Huang 2010:186(75b))

- b’) 你 [喜歡] [不 喜歡 這 本 書]?
 ni xihuan bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you like not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) (or) not like this book?’

(R. Huang 2010:186(75b’))

- c) 你 [喜__] [不 喜歡 這 本 書]?
 ni xi- bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you li- not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) (or) not like this book?’

(R. Huang 2010:186(75c))

- c') 你 [喜] [不 喜歡 這 本 書] ?
ni xi- bu xihuan zhe-ben shu
 you li- not like this-CL book

‘Do you like (this book) (or) not like this book?’

(R. Huang 2010:186(75c’))

2.3 The pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions

The above examples suggest that A-not-A questions generally present the hearer with the choice between affirmative and negative when they function as polar questions in a neutral context (Law 2006, Huang et al. 2009, Liing 2014). For instance, the speaker in (51) does not hold any assumption about whether the hearer is going to Paris or not.

- (51) 你 去 唔 去 巴黎 啊 ?
nei5 heoi3-m4-heoi3 Baa1lai4 aa3
 you go-not-go Paris SFP

‘Are you going to Paris?’

Cantonese
 (Law 2006:297(8a))

Huang et al. (2009), following the Logical Form movement approach in J. Huang (1991), propose that the A-not-A constituent 高興不高興 *gaosing-bu-gaoxing* ‘happy-not-happy’ in (52a) is base-generated as an interrogative then moves to the position that lower than CP but higher than IP as shown in (52b). Thus, the A-not-A constituent 高興不高興 *gaosing-bu-gaoxing* ‘happy-not-happy’ is ‘taken as a (non-objectual) quantifier ranging over two predicate meanings’ (Huang et al. 2009, p.255) as shown in (52c). As (72) is a genuine question, the scope of the quantifier is 去唔去 *heoi3-m4-heoi3* ‘go-not-go’ that has scope over the predicate meaning.

- (52) a) [CP [IP 你 高興 不 高興]] (呢)] ?
ni gaosing-bu-gaoxing ne
 you happy-not-happy Q

‘Are you happy?’

Mandarin
 (Huang et al. 2009:255(72))

- b) [CP [VP 高興 不 高興]_i [IP 你 t_{VP}] (呢)] ?
gaosing-bu-gaoxing ni ne
 happy-not-happy you Q

- c) For which x , $x \in \{\text{高興 } gaoxing \text{ 'happy'}, \text{不高興 } bu-gaoxing \text{ 'not-happy'}\}$

However, A-not-A questions can also function as rhetorical questions (Yin 2009) and perform indirect speech acts (Shao et al. 2010).

2.3.1 Speech Acts – Searle’s Approach

According to Searle (1969, 1976, 1979), speech acts are classified into five types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. Representatives are used to express the speaker’s degree of commitment to the truth of the expressed proposition. They include suggesting and concluding. Directives are the speaker’s attempt to get the hearer to do something, for example, by requesting and questioning. Commissives are used to indicate that the speaker will do something in future, for example, promises and threats. Expressive are used to express the speaker’s psychological state to the hearer, for example, the speaker may thank the hearer or apologize. Declarations bring about a change just by being uttered, as in when the boss says ‘You’re fired’.

Some of these speech acts can be directly or indirectly expressed. This applies especially to directives (cf. Searle 1979, p.45). For example, as per (53), the parents tell their children off if they do not want to go to school. In this situation, the parents usually use a severely questioning tone to ask their children ‘Are you going to school?’ that is similar to English ‘You are going to school, aren’t you?’ Then the answer must be the affirmative ‘I am going to school’. Hence, the A-not-A question in (53a) is performing the indirect speech act of giving a command to the children. When the V-not-V sequence 返唔返 *faan1 m4 faan1* ‘go not go’ precedes the object 學 *hok6* ‘school’, the resulting A-not-AB forms have a cohesive structure to express the questioned focus (Shao et al. 2010). Shao et al. (2010) suggests that the AB-not-A form lacks cohesion and hence (53b) cannot perform the act of issuing command to the hearers.

- (53) a) 你 返 唔 返 學 ?
 nei5 faan1 m4 faan1 hok6
 you return not return school

‘Are you going to school?’

Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:120(5))

- b) ?你 返 學 唔 返 ?
 nei5 faan1 hok6 m4 faan1
 you return school not return

Cantonese
 (Shao et al. 2010:120(5))

2.3.2 Gambits

Keller (1979) suggests that gambits act as conversational strategy signals. Gambits are used by speakers to structure their presentation of topics and turn-taking in conversation. For example, if a speaker wants to enter a conversation or take a turn, he may say ‘May I interrupt you for a moment?’ as shown in (54). Speakers can use gambits to show their state of consciousness, for example, to signal that they are or are not ready to listen, such as (55). Speakers also use gambits to check whether the listener has understood the message. For example, in (56), when the speaker gives instructions to the listener, he uses ‘Is that clear?’ to check with the listener whether he has understood.

- (54) Social context - I want to have a turn:
 May I interrupt you for a moment? Keller 1979:226(1)
- (55) State of consciousness – I am ready to receive information
 I’d like to hear all about it. Keller 1979:228(1)
- (56) Communication control – Do you understand/hear me?
 Is that clear? Keller 1979:226(1)

2.4 Alternative Ways of Asking Yes/No Questions

There are several different types of yes/no questions besides A-not-A questions. According to J. Huang (1998) and Huang et al. (2009), 嗎 *ma* questions have been viewed as equivalent to A-not-A questions. For example, if the speaker asks the addressee whether they smoke, the question can be expressed by *ma* question or A-not-A question as shown in (57a) and (57b) respectively. Both questions can be answered by the positive answer 抽 *chou* ‘(I) smoke’ or the negative answer 不抽 *buchou* ‘(I do) not smoke’. However, Liing (2014) suggests that 嗎 *ma* questions and A-not-A questions cannot be ‘interchangeable’ as they are used to express speakers’ different attitudes (p.36). 嗎 *ma* questions are used to express a speaker’s suspicion directly, however, A-not-A questions are used to indicate that the speaker does not hold any

assumption. In addition, Liing points that the answer of (58a) can also be responded with 對 *dui* ‘correct’ or 不對 *budui* ‘incorrect’.

- (57) a) 你 抽 煙 嗎 ?
ni chouyan ma
 you smoke Q

‘You smoke?’

Mandarin
 (Liing 2014:36(29))

- b) 你 抽 不 抽 煙 ?
ni chou-bu-chou yan
 you smoke-not-smoke.cigarettes

‘Do you smoke?’

Mandarin
 (Liing 2014:36(30))

Besides A-not-A questions and *ma* questions, there are several other ways to ask yes/no question in Cantonese, such as 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-not-have’ questions, particle questions or 未 *mei6* questions (Matthew and Yip 2011). For example, in (58), the speaker uses a 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-not-have’ question to ask whether there is anything to eat. The response to this question is 有 *jau5* ‘have’ or 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’. In (59), when the sentence-final particle 呀 *aa4* is added to the statement 你下個禮拜放假 *nei5 haa6 go3 lai5baa3 fong3gaa3* ‘you’re going on leave next week’, the statement is changed into a question. This particle question can be responded to with 係 *hai6* ‘yes’ or 唔係 *m4hai6* ‘no’. In (60), the negative maker 未 *mei6* ‘not yet’ follows the declarative clause 你食咗飯 *nei5 sik6-zo2 faan6* ‘you have eaten’ to form question asking whether you have eaten. The reply to this question is 食咗 *sik6zo2* ‘(I) have eaten’ or 未呀 *mei6aa3* ‘not yet’.

- (58) 有 冇 飯 食 㗎 ?
jau5mou5 faan6 sik6 gaa3
 have-not-have⁴ rice eat SFP

‘Is there anything to eat?’

Cantonese
 (Matthews and Yip 2011:365)

⁴ In this chapter, the glossing of 有冇 *jau5-mou3* is followed by Matthew and Yip (2011). However, the form of 有冇 *jau5-mou3* really is ‘have-have.not’, i.e. ‘A-not’ because 有 *jau5* ‘have’ is not repeated. So I have glossed 有冇 *jau5-mou3* as ‘have-have.not’ in the rest of this study.

- (59) 你 下 個 禮 拜 放 假 呀 ？
nei5 haa6 go3 lai5baai3 fong3-gaa3 aa4
 you next CL week take-leave **SFP**

‘You’re going on leave next week?’

Cantonese
 (Matthew and Yip 2011:360)

- (60) 你 食 咗 飯 未 呀 ？
nei5 sik6-zo2 faan6 mei6 aa3
 you eat-PFV food **not.yet** SFP

‘Have you eaten yet?’

Cantonese
 (Matthews and Yip 2011:362)

In conclusion, A-not-A questions in Chinese can take different forms with different syntactic and pragmatic properties, and they may alternate with other kinds of yes/no questions. The patterns attested in this study can be captured in the modular approach proposed by J. Huang (2010) and R. Huang (2010). Hence, I ask the following questions in the current study:

1. How many types of A-not-A questions are used in Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese? Do they have different syntactic structures?
2. Does the context affect which type of A-not-A question a speaker chooses, i.e. what are the pragmatic functions of different types of A-not-A questions?
3. What are the differences between Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese A-not-A questions?
4. What are the alternatives to A-not-A questions in Cantonese and Mandarin? What are the alternatives to (a) 係唔係 *hai6-m4-hai6* / 是不是 *shi-bu-shi* ‘be-not-be’ and (b) 有冇 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’? Do they have different syntactic structures?

Chapter 3 Methodology

Since one of the main aims of this study is to identify the pragmatic functions of A-not-A, it is important to consider them in the wider discourse context. Context can help us to see whether the speaker is explicitly asking a question or implicitly suggesting something to the listener. Films are a useful resource for addressing this question because the visual images combined with the sound provide rich contextual information. The data of the current study is based on three films produced in Hong Kong: *Ip Man*, *Ip Man 2* and *Ip Man 3*. All three films were released in both Hong Kong and China, as well as worldwide, they have audio dubbed Cantonese and Mandarin, plus Chinese and English subtitles⁵. These films allow us to explore the discourse function of A-not-A questions and compare the question structures used in the spoken and written languages. For example, in (1)⁶, the scene shows Cheung Wing-Sing and Ip Chun (Ip Man's wife and son) in a tiny house without any walls. When Ip Man came home and entered the house, he said 我回來了 *wo huilai le* 'I'm back' as shown in (1a), his son says 爸爸 *baba* 'Daddy' in (1b) and his wife responds 回來啦? *huilai la* 'You're back?' in (1c). In this situation, the wife has already seen that Ip Man has come back home and the son has also called him. Therefore, Cheung Wing-Sing's response to Ip Man is a greeting rather than a genuine question.

- (1) a) 葉 問 : 我 回 來 了
jip6 man6 *wo huilai le*
 Ip Man I return-PFV
 'Ip Man' 'I'm back.'
- b) 葉 準 : 爸 爸
jip6 zeon2 *baba*
 Ip Chun father
 'Ip Chun' 'Daddy'
- c) 張 永 成 : 回 來 啦 ?
zoeng1 wing5 sing4 *huilai la*
 Cheung Wing Sing return SFP
 'Cheung Wing-Sing' 'You're back?'

⁵ As we will see, the fact that the films were produced in Hong Kong may have influenced the Mandarin version and the Chinese subtitles.

⁶ This dialogue is extracted from the Chinese subtitles.

3.1 About the films

The three films are Hong Kong biographical martial art films based on the life of Ip Man who was a grandmaster of Wing Chun. The first film *Ip Man* focuses on events in Ip Man's life that took place in the city of Foshan during the Sino-Japanese War. *Ip Man 2* and *Ip Man 3* focus on events after he settled in Hong Kong.

3.1.1 Ip Man

In the 1930s, Foshan is the main centre of Southern Chinese martial arts, with various schools actively recruiting disciples. Although Ip Man is a highly skilled martial artist, he is discrete. As he is a wealthy man, he does not accept any disciples and spends his days training, meeting with friends, and spending time with his family. However, his wife (Cheung Wing-Sing) is often angry with Ip Man, who spends time training and discussing martial arts with friends. Ip Man becomes a hero when he beats an aggressive, rude, skillful Northern Chinese martial artist, Jin Shanzhao, which develops an atmosphere for learning Wing Chun in Foshan.

In 1937, the Japanese invasion affects the life of everyone in Foshan. Ip Man and his family lose their wealth and house. He begins to work at a coal mine. The Japanese General Miura sets up an arena where Chinese martial artists compete with Japanese soldiers. If the Chinese win a match, they earn a bag of rice. Thus, some martial artists including Lin (Ip's friend) go to the match. Finally, Ip Man finds that his friend Lin was killed in the fight. He rages at the Japanese military force, asking for a match with ten Japanese soldiers at once. His skill arouses the interest of General Miura. Then General Miura asks Ip Man to teach Wing Chun to the Japanese military force but he refuses. Meanwhile, Ip Man challenges General Miura to a match.

In this film, the Cantonese audio and the Mandarin audio both affect the Chinese subtitles. For example, in (2), the Chinese subtitles completely follow the Mandarin audio that is shown in the pronoun 咱們 *zanmen* 'we'. Northern Chinese generally uses 咱們 *zanmen* 'we' as a pronoun but written Chinese usually uses another pronoun 我們 *women* 'we'. However, in (3) the Chinese subtitles are based on the Cantonese audio. In Cantonese, the verb 講 *gong2* 'talk' means 'compare' when it is collocated with 武功 *mou5gung1* 'martial arts' and

武器 *mou5hei3* ‘weapon’. On the other hand, the Mandarin verb 講 *jiang* ‘talk’ usually expresses the meaning ‘pay attention to’, for example 講衛生 *jiang weisheng* ‘pay attention to hygiene’. It may be for this reason that the Mandarin audio uses the verb 比 *bi* ‘compare’ instead. The Chinese subtitles in (3) do not behave like standard written Chinese because the noun phrases 武功 *mou5gung1/wugong* ‘martial arts’ and 武器 *mou5hei3/wuqi* ‘weapon’ usually collocate with the verb 比 *bei2/bi* ‘compare’ in standard written Chinese.

Speaker	Version ⁷	Dialogue ⁸
(2) 廖師傅： <i>liu6 si1fu6</i> Liu teacher	C	...我哋係閉門切磋嘅，... <i>ngo5dei6 hai6 bai3 mun4 cit3co1 ge3</i> we be close door compare PRT
‘Master Liu’	M	...咱們是閉門切磋，... <i>zanmen shi bi men qiecuo</i> we be close door compare
	S	...咱們是閉門切磋，... <i>zanmen shi bi men qiecuo</i> we be close door compare
	E	‘... It’s all private.’
(3) 李超： <i>lei5 ciu1</i> Li Chiu	C	...講武功呀？講武器呀！ <i>gong2 mou5gung1 aa4 gong2 mou5hei3 aa3</i> talk martial arts SFP talk weapon SFP
‘Li Chiu’		槍呀！槍呀！... <i>coeng1 aa3 coeng1 aa3</i> gun SFP gun SFP
	M	...還比武？比武器呀！ <i>hai bi wu bi wuqi ya</i> still compare martial arts compare weapon SFP
		槍呀！槍呀！... <i>qiang ya qiang ya</i> gun SFP gun SFP

⁷ C – Cantonese, M – Mandarin, S – Chinese subtitle, E – English subtitle

⁸ Cantonese dialogue and speakers’ name use Jyutping for romanisation. Mandarin dialogue and Chinese subtitle use Pinyin for romanisation.

but the Chinese subtitles follow the Cantonese audio in using 將就 *zoeng1zau6/jiangjiu* ‘make do with’. In Mandarin, the verb 將就 *jiangjiu* means ‘put up with’. For example, you and your friends want to eat barbecue now, but the restaurant closed. If you and your friends are still willing to have barbecue, then you need to cook it by yourselves. So, you will say 買點肉將就下自己在家烤 *mai dian rou jiangjiu-xia ziji zai jia kao* ‘we buy some meat to do barbecue at home by ourselves’ to your friends as shown in (5).

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(4) 張 永 成 : <i>zoeng1 wing5 sing4</i> Cheung Wing Sing	C	咁 ...唯 有 叫 包 租 婆 佢 <i>gam2 wai4jau5 giu3 baan1zou1po4 keoi5</i> so only ask landlady she
‘Cheung Wing-Sing’		將 就 一 下 囉 <i>zoeng1zau6 jat1haa5 lo3</i> put.up.with a.bit SFP
	M	那 只 有 讓 房 東 太 太 幫 忙 一 下 啦 <i>na zhiyou rang fangdongtaitai bangmang yixia la</i> then only let landlady help a.bit SFP
	S	那 只 有 讓 房 東 太 太 將 就 一 下 <i>na zhiyou rang fangdongtaitai jiangjiu yixia</i> then only let landlady put.up.with a.bit
	E	‘We better ask the landlady to cut us some slack.’
(5) 買 點 肉 將 就 下 自 己 在 家 烤 <i>mai dian rou jiangjiu-xia ziji zai jia kao</i> buy some meat put.up.with-PRT self at home grill		

‘We buy some meat to do barbecue at home by ourselves.’

3.1.3 Ip Man 3

Ip Man has finally settled into a stable life in late 1950s Hong Kong. However, gangsters disturb the society and the police cannot do much to help. Therefore, Ip Man leads his disciples to guard the neighborhood.

Like Ip Man 2, Ip Man 3 does not have any significant differences between the audio and subtitling.

3.2 Data extractions and Analysis

I extracted all instances of the A-not-A questions from Cantonese, Mandarin and Chinese subtitles, along with the corresponding sentence in the other versions. In some examples, such as (6), Cantonese, Mandarin and the Chinese subtitles all have an A-not-A question in the same context. Where this was the case, I looked at whether they have any difference in the A. In this instance, all versions are using the same A, that is a disyllabic verb 請人 *ceng2jan4/qingren* ‘hire’. Then I examined whether they use the same A-not-A question structure. In example (6) all versions show the same A-not-A structure, i.e. only the first syllable 請 *ceng2/qing* is pronounced in the affirmative and the full verb 請人 *ceng2jan4/qingren* ‘hire’ is pronounced in the negative counterpart. Thirdly, I considered the pragmatic function of the A-not-A question: is it a genuine question or does it serve another purpose?

	Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(6)	葉 問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	老闆 , 你 呢度 請 唔 請人 呀 ? <i>lou5baan2 nei5 ni1dou6 ceng2-m4-ceng2jan4 aa3</i> boss you here hire-not-hire SFP
	‘Ip Man’	M	老闆 , 你 這裡 還 請 不 請人 ? <i>laopan ni zheli hai qing-bu-qingren</i> boss you here still hire-not-hire
		S	老闆 , 你 這兒 請 不 請人 ? <i>laopan ni zheer qing-bu-qingren</i> boss you here hire-not-hire
		E	‘Boss, are you hiring?’

In some instances, not every version uses an A-not-A question. For example, only the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles have an A-not-A form in (7). What is more, the monosyllabic verb that is used as A in the A-not-A question differs between the Mandarin audio and Chinese subtitles. Mandarin uses the copula 是 *shi* ‘be’ but the Chinese subtitles use the monosyllabic verb 對 *dui* ‘right’. In such cases, I investigated whether the different As (i.e. monosyllabic verbs in this instance) make a difference to the overall meaning of the

sentence. Example (7) clearly shows that 係咪 *hai6mai2* ‘is that right’⁹, 是不是 *shi-bu-shi* ‘be-not-be’ and 對不對 *dui-bu-dui* ‘correct-not-correct’ are all tag questions. This raises the question of why not all versions have an A-not-A question here. In other words, do the other forms have the same meaning and/or function?

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(7) 葉 問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	有 時間 都 攞 嚟 搵 食 喇 , 係 咪 ? <i>jau5 si4gaan3 dou1 lo2 lai4 wan2 sik6 laa3 hai6 mai2</i> have time all take come find eat SFP be don't
‘Ip Man’	M	有 時間 都 出來 找 事 做 啦 , 是 不 是 ? <i>you shijian dou chulai zhao shi zuo la shi-bu-shi</i> have time all come out find matter do SFP be-not-be
	S	有 時間 也 用 來 糊 口 吧 , 對 不 對 ? <i>you shijian ye yonglai hukou ba dui-bu-dui</i> have time also use for scrape a living SFP correct-not-correct
	E	<i>‘I’d rather used my time to scrape a living’</i>

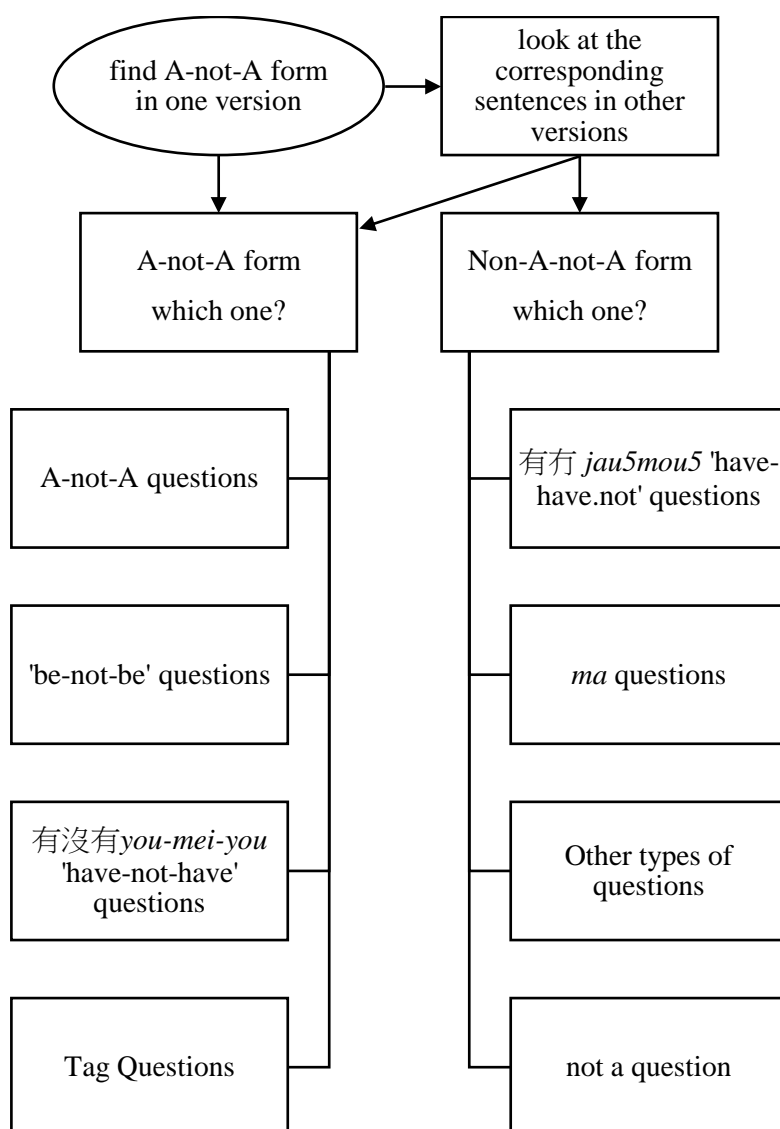
Mandarin and written Chinese not only have the negative marker 不 *bu* ‘not’, but also another negative marker 沒 *mei* ‘not’. Similarly, Cantonese has another negative marker 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’, but 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’ and 沒 *mei* ‘not’ cannot form the same A-not-A question structure. For instance, there are syntactic differences between the Cantonese audio, the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles in (8). If I move the complement 人想去 *jan4 soeng2 heoi3* ‘people want to go’ in-between 有 *jau5* ‘have’ and 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’ in Cantonese, the question becomes ungrammatical in Cantonese, as shown in (9). But if I move the complement 人想去 *ren xiang qu* ‘people want to go’ in-between 有 *you* ‘have’ and 沒有 *mei-you* ‘not-have’ in Mandarin and/or Chinese subtitles yielding an AB-not-A form, the question is still grammatical as shown in (10). As 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ is compatible with different kinds of A-not-A structures, I consider the questions of the form 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ to be an A-not-A form as well. However, 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ questions are not treated as A-not-A forms.

⁹ I have glossed 係 *hai6* and 咪 *mai2* separately as ‘be’ and ‘don’t’ but the overall meaning of 係咪 *hai6mai2* is ‘is that right’. Therefore, the gloss and the translation of 係咪 *hai6mai2* are different.

	Speaker	Version	Dialogue			
(8)	李 超 : <i>lei5 ciu1</i> Li Chiu	C	有 有 人 想 去 ? <i>jau5-mou5 jan4 soeng2 heoi3</i> have-have.not people want go			
	‘Li Chiu’	M	有 沒 有 人 想 去 ? <i>you-mei-you ren xiang qu</i> have-not-have people want go			
		S	有 沒 有 人 想 去 ? <i>you-mei-you ren xiang qu</i> have-not-have people want go			
		E	‘Anybody wants to go?’			
(9)	* 有 [人 想 去] 有 ? <i>jau5 [jan4 soeng2 heoi3] mou5</i> have people want go have.not					
(10)	有 [人 想 去] 沒 有 ? <i>you [ren xiang qu] mei-you</i> have people want go not-have					
	‘Anybody wants to go?’					

For examples like (7) and (8), I considered the types of questions that appeared in the corresponding sentences. In these examples, the sentences in the Cantonese audio are not A-not-A forms. ‘Non-A-not-A forms’ were divided into four sub-groups: 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ questions, *ma* questions, other types of questions and not a question as shown in Table 1. So the question (7) in the Cantonese audio is categorised as other types of questions and the question (8) in the Cantonese audio is categorised as 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ questions. Similarly, A-not-A questions are categorised as ‘A-not-A forms’ and also are divided into four sub-groups: A-not-A questions, ‘be-not-be’ questions, 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ questions and tag questions. Therefore, the questions in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles in (7) and (8) are categorised as tag questions and 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ questions.

Figure 3.1 A flow chat of data extraction



For every extracted question, I also looked at the wider context to identify its pragmatic function. In some examples, such as (11)¹⁰, the scene shows that Ip Man entering the house and his wife, Cheung Wing-Sing, says 今日𢇛唔𢇛呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* 'Were you tired today?' in (11a). Literally, 今日𢇛唔𢇛呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* means 'today were you tired or not?' but native Cantonese speakers generally use this sentence as a greeting when someone comes home after work. In this instance, this A-not-A question not only functions as a greeting, but also shows that the speaker cares. In the previous scene, Cheung Wing-Sing gets sick and worries about how they will make a living. Ip Man tells her there is no need to worry about that because he can go to work. However, Cheung Wing-Sing questions whether Ip Man can find a job as he has never worked before. Ip Man tells Cheung

¹⁰ This dialogue is extracted from the Cantonese audio.

Wing-Sing what kind of job he got in (11b). This suggests that Cheung Wing-Sing also used 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘were you tired today?’ in (88a) to mean ‘did you find a job today?’.

	Speaker	Dialogue
(11) a)	張 永 成 : <i>zoeng1 wing5 sing4</i> Cheung Wing Sing	今 日 𢦏 唔 𢦏 呀 ? <i>gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3</i> today tired-not-tired SFP
	‘Cheung Wing-Sing’	‘Were you tired today?’
b)	葉 問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	倒 吓 煤 嗟 , 有 幾 𢦏 呀 ? <i>dou2-haa5 mui4 ze1 jau5 gei2 gui6 aa3</i> pour-DEL coal SFP have how many tired SFP
	‘Ip Man’	‘Pouring coal is not tiring at all.’

Chapter 4 Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses the attested data of the A-not-A question and the corresponding sentences in other versions in the current study. In Section 4.1, I will discuss the general findings in the attested data. The forms of A-not-A questions will be discussed in Section 4.2. The differences between Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese in A-not-A questions will be discussed in Section 4.3. In addition, speech acts and pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions will be discussed in Section 4.4.

4.1 General Findings

In the current study, the attested data were mainly divided into two main groups: ‘A-not-A structure’ and ‘Non-A-not-A structure’ as shown in Table 4.1. These two main groups were also divided into four sub-groups. For ‘A-not-A structure’, including basic A-not-A questions, two special A-not-A questions: ‘be-not-be’ and 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’, and tag questions. For ‘Non-A-not-A structure’, including 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ questions, *ma* questions, other types of questions and not a question (such as declarative sentence). Table 4.1 suggests that there are slightly higher frequencies of A-not-A structure in the Mandarin audio (77.78%) and the Chinese subtitles (72.62%) compared with the Cantonese audio (66.27%). However, tag questions of A-not-A structure seem more common in Cantonese (see Table 4.2), and once the special A-not-A questions (i.e. ‘be-not-be’ questions and 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ questions) are excluded, the basic A-not-A questions are more frequent in the Cantonese audio than the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles, as shown in Table 4.3. I found that there are no instances of ‘be-not-be’ in the Cantonese audio but some instances appear in the other versions. Although 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ in Cantonese is comparable to 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ in Mandarin and written Chinese, however, there are syntactic differences between 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ and 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’. The 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’ question becomes ungrammatical as if the complement inserts in-between 有 *jau5* ‘have’ and 冇 *mou5* ‘have not’ in Cantonese. Table 4.3 shows that the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles do not always have 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ questions, where the Cantonese has 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have.not’. In other words, there are alternatives to A-not-A questions in the different versions. The alternatives can be *ma*

questions, other types of questions (such as rising intonation) or express in a declarative sentence.

Table 4.1 Frequency of A-not-A structure and Non-A-not-A structure in the Cantonese audio, the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles

	A-not-A Structure	Non-A-not-A Structure	Total
Cantonese	55 (66.27%)	28 (33.73%)	83
Mandarin	63 (77.78%)	18 (22.22%)	81
Chinese Subtitles	61 (72.62%)	23 (27.38%)	84
Total	179	69	

X^2 Cantonese by Mandarin = 2.6923, df = 1, not significant at 0.05 level

X^2 Cantonese by Chinese Subtitles = 0.7946, df = 1, not significant at 0.05 level

Table 4.2 Distribution of A-not-A question and tag questions of A-not-A structure in the Cantonese audio, the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles

	A-not-A Structure		Total
	A-not-A Questions	Tag Questions	
Cantonese	42 (76.36%)	13 (23.64%)	55
Mandarin	53 (84.13%)	10 (15.87%)	63
Chinese Subtitles	51 (83.61%)	10 (16.39%)	61
Total	99	33	

X^2 Cantonese by Mandarin = 1.1278, df = 1, not significant at 0.05 level

X^2 Cantonese by Chinese Subtitles = 0.9545, df = 1, not significant at 0.05 level

Table 4.3 Distribution of A-not-A questions in the Cantonese audio, the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles

	Basic A-not-A Questions	Special A-not-A Questions		Total
		‘be-not-be’	有沒有 you-mei-you ‘have-not-have’	
Cantonese	42	0 ^①	0 ^②	42
Mandarin	31	5	17	63
Chinese Subtitles	26	4	21	61
Total	99	9	38	

① In contexts where the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles have 是不是 *shi-bu-shi* ‘be-not-be’, the Cantonese audio usually has 係咪 *hai6mai2* ‘is that right’.

② The Cantonese equivalent of 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ is 有冇 *jau5mou5* ‘have-have-not’.

4.1.1 A-not-A Questions

Most of the A-not-A questions are formed by monosyllabic verbs in all three versions, as in (1) and (2). In (1), all versions use the same monosyllabic verb 肯 *hang2/ken* ‘agree’ to form an A-not-A question. Since there is no complement in the A-not-A question, this is a so-called A-not-A form. The sentence-final particle 呀 *aa3* occurs in the Cantonese A-not-A question only. Similarly, the A-not-A questions in (2) do not contain any complements and only the Cantonese A-not-A question appears with a sentence-final particle 呀 *aa1*. However, in (2), each version uses different monosyllabic verb to form the A-not-A question in the same context. In this case, the verbs 識 *sik1* ‘know’ in the Cantonese audio and 懂 *dong* ‘know’ in the Chinese subtitles are used for ‘can’ in the sense of being able to do fight and

hence there are no differences in meaning between 識 *sik1* ‘know’, 會 *hui* ‘can’ and 懂 *dong* ‘know’.

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(1) 周 光 耀 : <i>zau1 gwong1 jiu6</i> Chow Kwong Yiu	C	老 寶 呀 , 問 叔 肯 唔 肯 呀 ? <i>lou5dau6 aa4 man6 suk1 hang2-m4-hang2 aa3</i> dad SFP Man uncle agree-not-agree SFP
‘Chow Kong-Yiu’	M	老 爸 , 問 叔 肯 不 肯 ? <i>laoba wen shu ken-bu-ken</i> dad Man uncle agree-not-agree
	S	老 爸 , 問 叔 肯 不 肯 ? <i>laoba wen shu ken-bu-ken</i> dad Man uncle agree-not-agree
	E	Dad, did Uncle Ip agree?
(2) 張 峰 : <i>zoeng1 fung1</i> Cheung Fong	C	...你 識 唔 識 呀 ? <i>nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1</i> you know-not-know SFP
‘Cheung Fong’	M	...你 會 不 會 ? <i>ni hui-bu-hui</i> you can-not-can
	S	...你 懂 不 懂 ? <i>ni dong-bu-dong</i> you know-not-know
	E	... Can you fight?

There are also instances where disyllabic words like the verb 可以 *ho2ji5/keyi* ‘can’ in (3) and the adjective 方便 *fong1bin6/fangbian* ‘convenient’ in (4) form A-not-A questions. In (3), the first syllable 可 *ho2/ke* is pronounced in the affirmative in all versions and the full verb 可以 *ho2ji5/keyi* ‘can’ is pronounced in the negative with the complement 再挑戰三個 *zoi3 tiulzin3 saam1 go3/zai tiaozhan san ge* ‘challenge (fight) three more (people)’, to give an a-not-AB form. For the adjective 方便 *fong1bin6/fangbian* ‘convenient’ only the first syllable 方 *fong1/fang* is pronounced in the affirmative and the full adjective 方便 *fong1bin6/fangbian* ‘convenient’ is pronounced in the negative without a complement, to

yield an a-not-A form. Only the Cantonese A-not-A question in (4) contains a sentence-final particle, in this case 呢 *nei*.

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(3) 葉問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	我可唔可以再挑戰三個 ? <i>ngo5 ho2-m4-ho2ji5 zoi3 tiu1zin3 saam1 go3</i> I can-not-can again challenge three CL
‘Ip Man’	M	我可不可以再挑戰三個 ? <i>wo ke-bu-keyi zai tiaozhan san ge</i> I can-not-can again challenge three CL
	S	我可不可以再挑戰三個 ? <i>wo ke-bu-keyi zai tiaozhan san ge</i> I can-not-can again challenge three CL
	E	Can I fight three more people?
(4) 葉問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	… 唔知你方唔方便呢 ? <i>… m4 zi1 nei5 fong1-m4-fong1bin6 nei</i> … not know you convenient-not-convenient SFP
‘Ip Man’	M	… 不知道你方不方便 ? <i>… bu zhidao ni fang-bu-fangbian</i> … not know you convenient-not-convenient
	S	… 不知道你方不方便 ? <i>… bu zhidao ni fang-bu-fangbian</i> … not know you convenient-not-convenient
	E	… Is that all right with you?

In the examples (1) and (2), the monosyllabic words form an A-not-A question without a complement (i.e. they take the A-not-A form). However, transitive monosyllabic verbs can also appear in A-not-AB questions with a complement, like the Cantonese example in (5). The complement 你自己做緊乜嘢 *nei5 zi6gei2 zou6gan2 mat1je5* ‘what are you doing’ is an embedded *wh*-question that follows the monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’ to form an A-not-AB form. Again, the Cantonese A-not-A question occurs with the sentence-final particle 呀 *aa3*. Meanwhile, there are some differences between the audios and the subtitling in (5). Firstly, the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles use the disyllabic verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ that is equivalent of the Cantonese monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’. In the Chinese

subtitles, the first syllable 知 *zhi* is pronounced in the affirmative and the full verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ in the negative counterpart with the complement 自己在做甚麼 *ziji zai zuo shenme* ‘what are you doing’, to yield an a-not-AB form. In addition, the subject pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’ is missing in the Chinese subtitles. There is no A-not-A structure in the Mandarin audio. Instead, the question particle 嗎 *ma* marks the sentence as a yes/no question.

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(5) 葉 問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	... 你 知 唔 知 你 自 己 做 緊 乜 嘢 呀 ? ... <i>nei5 zhi1-m4-zhi1 nei5zi6gei2 zou6-gan2 mat1je5 aa3</i> ... you know-not-know yourself do-CONT what SFP
‘Ip Man’	M	... 你 知 道 你 自 己 在 做 甚 麼 嗎 ? ... <i>ni zhidao niziji zai zuo shenme ma</i> ... you know yourself be doing do what Q
	S	... 知 不 知 道 自 己 在 做 甚 麼 ? ... <i>zhi-bu-zhidao ziji zai zuo shenme</i> ... know-not-know self be doing do what
	E	... You know what you’re doing?

The above examples suggest that the complement is not present in all A-not-A questions and hence I suggest that there are four patterns of A-not-A questions, i.e. A-not-A form, a-not-A form, A-not-AB form and a-not-AB form, in the current data even though AB-not-AB and AB-not-A are also mentioned in the literature.

4.1.1.1 ‘be-not-be’

Besides the general A-not-A questions, the copula verb ‘be’ is another monosyllabic verb to form an A-not-A question when the speaker uses ‘be-not-be’ to confirm that something is true. The current data does not have any instances of the Cantonese copula verb 係 *hai6* ‘be’ forming an A-not-A question but I do have tag question of the form 係唔係 *hai6-m4-hai6* ‘be-not-be’ in the sample (see example (16)). Instead, it usually collocates with the negative word 咪 *mai2* ‘don’t’ to form 係咪 *hai6mai2* ‘is that right’. Hence I will focus on the copula verb 是 *shi* ‘be’ in Mandarin and written Chinese in this discussion. In (6), Kung Fu Crazy Lam uses the copula verb 是 *shi* ‘be’ and the negative counterpart 不是 *bu-shi* ‘not-be’ to

form ‘be-not-be’ and follows it with the complement 閉門切磋 *bi men qiecuo* ‘private duel’ to explicitly ask Ip Man whether the duel happened in private.

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(6) 武痴林 : <i>mou5 ci1 lam4</i> martial crazy Lam ‘Kung Fu Crazy Lam’	C	問哥 , 你哋係咪閉門 <i>man6 go1 nei5dei6 hai6 mai2 bai3 mun4</i> Man brother you be don’t close door 切磋 嚟 ? <i>cit3co1 gaa3</i> comparison SFP
	M	問哥 , 你們是不是閉門切磋 ? <i>wen ge nimen shi-bu-shi bi men qiecuo</i> Man brother you be-not-be close door comparison
	S	問哥 , 你們是不是閉門切磋 ? <i>wen ge nimen shi-bu-shi bi men qiecuo</i> Man brother you be-not-be close door comparison
	E	Was the duel private, Brother Ip?

Example (7) is another instance to illustrate that 是不是 *shi-bu-shi* ‘be-not-be’ with the complement 很能打 *hen neng da* ‘very good at fight’ forms an A-not-A question in A-not-AB form. In (7), the A-not-A question occupies in the embedded clause because the main verb in the sentence is 覺得 *juede* ‘think’. The Cantonese audio uses the adjective 好 *hou2* ‘good’ and the negative counterpart 唔好 *m4-hou2* ‘not-good’ with the complement 打 *daa2* ‘fight’ to form an indirect A-not-A question in A-not-AB form.

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(7) 葉問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man ‘Ip Man’	C	阿樑呀 , 你覺得我好唔好 <i>aa3-leong3 aa3 nei5 gok3dak1 ngo5 hou2-m4-hou2</i> Ah-Leung SFP you think I good-not-good 打呀 ? <i>daa2 aa3</i> fight SFP

- M 阿樑 , 你 覺得 我 是 不 是 很 能 打 ?
a-liang nǐ juede wo shi-bu-shi hen neng da
 Ah-Leung you think I **be-not-be** very can fight
- S 阿樑 , 你 覺得 我 是 不 是 很 能 打 ?
a-liang nǐ juede wo shi-bu-shi hen neng da
 Ah-Leung you think I **be-not-be** very can fight
- E Leung, how's my martial arts?

Examples (6) and (7) show that the copula verb 是 *shi* 'be' in Mandarin and written Chinese usually forms A-not-A questions of A-not-AB form.

4.1.1.2 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have'

The monosyllabic verb 有 *you* 'have' can also form an A-not-A question but collocates with the negative word 沒 *mei* 'not' rather than 不 *bu* 'not' only in Mandarin and written Chinese. According to Lü (1985), 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' can be of A-not-AB form and AB-not-A form, however, all instances in my sample are of the A-not-AB form only like (8)-(9). In (8), the complement 人想去 *ren xiang qu* 'anybody want to go' follows 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' to yield an A-not-AB form in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles. Similarly, in (9), both the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles use 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' with the complement 騷擾(到)你 *saorao (dao) ni* 'disturb you' to form an A-not-A question in A-not-AB form. In these two instances, I found that the Cantonese audio uses 有冇 *jau5-mou5* 'have-have.not' in the place of 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have'. Table 4.4 shows that the tokens of 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' in the Mandarin audio or in the Chinese subtitles almost equal to 有冇 *jau5-mou5* 'have-not.have' in the Cantonese. Meanwhile, the tokens of 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' in the Mandarin audio are not equivalent to the Chinese subtitles (as shown in Table 4.4). It seems there are also alternatives to 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' in Mandarin and written Chinese. In (10), both the Cantonese audio and the Mandarin audio just use the question particle 嗎 *maa3/ma* to form a yes/no question, whereas the Chinese subtitles uses 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have' with the complement 帶相機 *dai xiangji* 'bring a camera' to form an A-not-A question in A-not-AB form.

Table 4.4 Distrubtionof yes/no question involving 有沒有 *you-mei-you* 'have-not-have', 有冇 *jau5-mou5* 'have-have.not' and non-A-not-A structure in Cantoneseaudio, Mandarin audio and Chinese subtitles

	Yese/No Question			Total
	有沒有 <i>you-mei-you</i> 'have-not-have'	有冇 <i>jau5-mou5</i> 'have-have.not'	Non-A-not-A Structure	
Cantonese	-	19	2	21
Mandarin	17	-	5	22
Chinese Subtitles	21	-	1	22
Total	38	19	8	

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(8) 李 超 : <i>lei5 ciu1</i> Li Chiu	C	有 冇 人 想 去 ? <i>jau5-mou5 jan4 soeng4 heoi3</i> have-have.not people want go
'Li Chiu'	M	有 沒 有 人 想 去 ? <i>you-mei-you ren xiang qu</i> have-not-have people want go
	S	有 沒 有 人 想 去 ? <i>you-mei-you ren xiang qu</i> have-not-have people want go
	E	Anybody wants to go?

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(9) 葉 問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	... 我 徒 弟 有 有 騷 擾 過 你 啊 ? <i>ngo5 tou4dai6 jau5-mou5 sou1jiu5-gwo3 nei5 aa3</i> I disciple have-have.not disturb-EXP you SFP
‘Ip Man’	M	... 我 徒 弟 有 沒 有 騷 擾 到 你 ? <i>wo tudi you-mei-you saorao dao ni</i> I disciple have-not-have disturb to you
	S	... 我 徒 弟 有 沒 有 騷 擾 你 ? <i>wo tudi you-mei-you saorao ni</i> I disciple have-not-have disturb you
	E	... Is my disciple giving you trouble?
(10) 張 天 志 : <i>zoeng1 tin1 zi3</i> Cheung Tin Chi	C	你 有 帶 相 機 嗎 ? <i>nei5 jau5 daai3 soeng3gei3 maa3</i> you have bring camera Q
‘Cheung Tin-Chi’	M	你 帶 照 相 機 了 嗎 ? <i>ni dai zhaoxiangji le ma</i> you bring camera PFV Q
	S	你 有 沒 有 帶 相 機 ? <i>ni you-mei-you dai xiangji</i> you have-not-have bring camera
	E	Got your camera?

The above examples show that 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’ usually forms A-not-A questions of A-not-AB form in the current sample.

4.1.2 Tag Questions

All the tag questions in my sample are formed by a monosyllabic word such as 好 *hou2/hao* ‘good’, 對 *dui* ‘correct’ and 係 *hai6* ‘be’. In (11), either version uses the same monosyllabic word 好 *hou2/hao* ‘good’ collocates with the negative marker 唔 *m4* or 不 *bu* to form an A-not-A structure 好唔好 *hou2-m4-hou2* in the Cantonese audio or 好不好 *hao-bu-hao* ‘good-not-good’ in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles as a tag question. The sentence-final particle 呀 *aa3* collocates with the tag question in the Cantonese version as well. Some instances show that different versions may use different monosyllabic words to form a tag

question in the same context such as (12). Even though the literal meaning of the coupla verb 係 *hai6* ‘be’ is not the same as the monosyllabic verb 對 *dui* ‘correct’, they have the same function to ask for confirmation in (12).

Speaker	Version	Dialogue
(11) 葉問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	搵 日 先 呀 , 好 唔 好 呀 ? ... <i>wan2 jat6 sin1 aa1 hou2-m4-hou2 aa3</i> find day first SFP good-not-good SFP
‘Ip Man’	M	改 天 吧 , 好 不 好 ? ... <i>gai tian ba hao-bu-hao</i> change day SFP good-not-good
	S	改 天 吧 , 好 不 好 ? ... <i>gai tian ba hao-bu-hao</i> change day SFP good-not-good
	E	Can we do it some other day? ...
(12) 葉問 : <i>jip6 man6</i> Ip Man	C	係 囉 , 將 就 一 下 喇 , 我 就 你 , <i>hai6 lo3 zoeng1zau6 jat1haa5 laa3 ngo5 zau6 nei5</i> be SFP put.up.with a.bit SFP I put.up.with you
‘Ip Man’		你 就 我 , 就 吓 就 吓 <i>nei5 zau6 ngo5 zau6-haa5 zau6-haa5</i> you put.up.with I put.up.with-DEL put.up.with-DEL
		冇 相 干 嚟 喇 , 係 唔 係 ? <i>mou5-soeng1gon1 gaa3 laa3 hai6-m4-hai6</i> not-relate SFP SFP be-not-be
	M	是啊 , 幫 一 下 吧 , 我 幫 你 , <i>shi a bang yixia ba wo bang ni</i> be SFP help a.bit SFP I help you
		你 幫 我 , 幫 來 幫 去 就 會 過 去 的 , <i>ni bang wo banglaibangqu jiu hui guoqu-de</i> you help I help to help then will past-PRT
		對 不 對 ? <i>dui-bu-dui</i> correct-not-correct

- S 是啊，將就一下吧，我將就你，
shi a jiangjiu yixia ba wo jiangjiu ni
 be SFP put.up.with a.bit SFP I put.up.with you
- 你將就我，將就一下就挺過去了，
ni jiangjiu wo jiangjiu yixia jiu tingguoqu-le
 you put.up.with I put.up.with a.bit then survive -PFV

對不對？
duì-bú-duì
correct-not-correct

- E Sure, ask her to cut us some slack. I accommodate you; you accommodate me. Everything will be OK, right?

Not all tag questions in my sample had an A-not-A form. For example, 係咪 *hai6mai2* ‘is that right’ is an alternative to 係唔係 *hai6-m4-hai6* ‘be-not-be’ for a tag question in Cantonese to confirm the truth of a proposition. In Mandarin or written Chinese, 對嗎 *dui ma* ‘is that correct’ is an alternative to 對不對 *dui-bu-dui* ‘correct-not-correct’ for a tag question asking for confirmation as well.

According to Chen and He (2000) and Kimps et al. (2014), tag questions often follow a sentence and is used to reinforce the illocutionary force of the sentence. Therefore, tag question is used for verification or confirmation. Chen and He (2000) suggest that tag question helps the speaker to maintain the attention of the addressee during the activities. Tag questions are syntactically different from regular A-not-A question and also different in function. Hence tag questions would not be discussed further in the current study.

4.2 Forms of A-not-A Questions

In the previous section, I suggest that there are four attested patterns of A-not-A questions in my sample: the A-not-A form, a-not-A form, A-not-AB form and a-not-AB form. Although the A-not-A questions of A-not-A form and a-not-A form do not contain any overt complements, sometimes the complement has already been mentioned in the discourse. For example, in (13), the speaker (Chou Kwong-Yiu) is actually asking his father whether Ip Man agreed to teach him Wing Chun. However, the complement ‘to teach him Wing Chun’ is not pronounced in the A-not-A question because in the previous scene, Chou Kwong-Yiu overhears his father telling Ip Man that Chou would like to be Ip’s first disciple. Even though

Chou Kwong-Yiu does not mention the complement when he asks his father about it, his father knows what the complement is. Therefore, some of the A-not-A forms arguably contain covert complements.

- (13) 老 寶 呀 , 問 叔 肯 唔 肯 呀 ?
lou5dau6 aa4 man6 suk1 hang2-m4-hang2 aa3
 dad SFP Man uncle agree-not-agree SFP

‘Dad, did Uncle Ip agree?’

4.2.1 A-not-A Forms

While some of the A-not-A form may contain a covert complement, there are also examples such as (14), where the predicate is intransitive. In (14), the A-not-A constituent is formed by the monosyllabic intransitive verb 痛 *tung3* ‘pain’ and thus the A-not-A constituent 痛唔痛 *tung3-m4-tung3* in (14) is used as a quantifier ranging over the two predicate meanings, i.e. 痛 *tung3* ‘pain’ and 唔痛 *m4-tung3* ‘not pain’ (cf. (52c) on p.33) according to Huang et al. (2009, p.255). Hence, (14) does not exist any deletion of the identical elements.

- (14) ... 隻 眼 仲 痛 唔 痛 ?
zek3 ngaan5 zung6 tung3-m4-tung3
 CL eye still pain-not-pain

‘... does it hurt?’

4.2.2 A-not-AB Forms

A-not-AB forms in the current sample typically involve ‘be-not-be’ and 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’. For instance, in (15a), the verb 有 *you* ‘have’ is pronounced in the affirmative and the negative counterpart. The complement 錢 *qian* ‘money’ follows the A-not-A sequence 有沒有 *you-mei-you* ‘have-not-have’. A-not-A questions have always been treated as coordinate structures in Chinese grammar, where the affirmative and the negative counterparts are joined to make a phrase (Hu 2003, p.420). J. Huang (1988, 2010) and R. Huang (2010) propose that the A-not-AB form is derived from the coordinate structure (i.e. AB-not-AB form) without a disjunctive coordinator. In this approach, (15b) is the underlying form of (15a), without a disjunctive coordinator. The identical object NPs 錢 *qian* ‘money’ occur on the right branch of the tree. According to R. Huang (2010), conjunction reduction

applies to (15b) in the backward direction and deletes the NP 錢 *qian* ‘money’ in the affirmative to give (15c).

- (15) a) 你 有 沒 有 錢 ?
ni you-mei-you qian
 you **have-not-have** money
 ‘Do you have cash?’
- b) 你 有 [錢] 沒 有 [錢] ?
ni you qian mei-you qian
 you **have** money **not-have** money
 ‘Do you have cash (or) not have cash?’
- c) 你 有 [] 沒 有 [錢] ?
ni you mei-you qian
 you **have** **not-have** money
 ‘Do you have cash?’

Similarly, the monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’ is fully pronounced in the affirmative and the negative counterpart in (16a). In J. Huang (1988, 2010) and R. Huang (2010)’s approach, (16a) is also derived from a coordinate AB-not-AB form (16b) via conjunction reduction. In (16b), the complement 你自己做緊乜嘢 *nei5zi6gei2 zou6gan2 mat1je5* ‘what are you doing’ again occurs on the right branch of the tree, hence conjunction reduction will apply to (16b) in the backward direction and deletes the embedded *wh*-question 你自己做緊乜嘢 *nei5zi6gei2 zou6gan2 mat1je5* ‘what are you doing’ in the affirmative to give (16c).

- (16) a) 你 知 唔 知 你 自 己 做 緊 乜 嘢 呀 ?
nei5 zi1-m4-zi1 nei5zi6gei2 zou6-gan2 mat1je5 aa3
 you **know-not-know** yourself do-CONT what SFP
 ‘You know what you’re doing?’

- b) 你 知 [你 自 己 做 緊 乜 嘢] 唔 知 [你 自 己
nei5 zi1 nei5zi6gei2 zou6-gan2 mat1je5 m4-zi1 nei5zi6gei2
 you know yourself do-CONT what not-know yourself

做 緊 乜 嘢] 呀 ?
zou6-gan2 mat1je5 aa3
 do-CONT what SFP

‘You know what you’re doing (or) don’t know what you’re doing?’

- c) 你 知 [_____] 唔 知 [你 自 己
nei5 zi1 m4-zi1 nei5zi6gei2
 you know not-know yourself

做 緊 乜 嘢] 呀 ?
zou6-gan2 mat1je5 aa3
 do-CONT what SFP

‘You know what you’re doing?’

As the above examples illustrate, the A-not-AB form obeys the conjunction reduction rule, i.e. the directionality constraint, which deletes the identical complement in the backward direction. Hence, these data support R. Huang’s conjunction reduction analysis of A-not-AB forms.

4.2.3 a-not-AB Forms

In the data, there are no examples where the full disyllabic verb or adjective is pronounced in the affirmative. For all instances of disyllabic verbs or adjectives only the first syllable is pronounced in the affirmative and the full verb or adjective in the negative counterpart. For example, the adjective ‘suitable’ is extracted from the same context but the order of morphemes (or syllables) is different in the Mandarin audio and Chinese subtitles, i.e. 合適 *heshi* vs. 適合 *shihe*. In Chinese, there is no meaning difference between 合適 *heshi* and 適合 *shihe* even though the order of the morphemes is different. In the Mandarin audio, the adjective ‘suitable’ is pronounced as 合適 *heshi* but in the Chinese subtitles the order is 適合 *shihe*. (In this case, 合適 *heshi* and 適合 *shihe* are synonyms, however, the same two morphemes (i.e. 合 *he* and 適 *shi*) appear in different order.) R. Huang’s approach correctly predicts the attested forms (17b) and (18b).

- (17) a) 合適 不 合適
heshi-bu-heshi
 suitable-not-suitable
- b) 合__ 不 合適
he__ -bu-heshi
 suit(able)-not-suitable
- c) * 合適 不 合__
heshi-bu-he__
- d) * __適 不 合適
 __*shi-bu-heshi*
- e) * 合適 不 __ 適
heshi-bu-__shi
- (18) a) 適合 不 適合
shihe-bu-shihe
 suitable-not-suitable
- b) 適__ 不 適合
shi__ -bu-shihe
 suit(able)-not-suitable
- c) * 適合 不 適__
shihe-bu-shi__
- d) * __合 不 適合
 __*he-bu-shihe*
- e) * 適合 不 __ 合
shihe-bu-__he

In R. Huang's approach, (17a) and (18a) are the underlying forms of 合不合適 *he-bu-heshi* 'suitable-not-suitable' and 適不適合 *shi-bu-shihe* 'suitable-not-suitable' respectively. In (17a), the identical syllable on the right edge in a disjunct is 適 *shi* so the deletion is applied in backward direction to give (17b). If the deletion is applied in forward direction to give (17c), it violates the directionality constraint. If the deletion is applied in a backward direction on another identical syllable, 合 *he*, to give (17d), it violates the directionality constraint and the contrastiveness constraint as well. If the deletion is applied in a forward

direction to give (17e), it also still violates the directionality constraint and the contrastiveness constraint. R. Huang (2010) points out that A-not-AB questions are based on contrast and hence the contrastive elements in the A-not-A sequence are the initial syllable of verb (or adjective, or adverb) in the affirmative and the negative marker and the initial syllable of verb (or adjective, or adverb) in the negative counterpart. If the contrastive element is dropped, the sentence is ungrammatical. Thus (17d)-(17e) is ungrammatical. Similar to (17), the test in (18) also gives the same result. Only (18b) obeys the directionality constraint and the contrastiveness constraint. The data support the claim that syllable reduction applies to delete an identical right edge syllable or morpheme in a disjunct. Although some of the compound verbs, adjectives or adverbs can have the same morphemes in different orders with the same meaning (like ‘suitable’ can be expressed as 合適 *heshi* or 適合 *shihe*), they are still restricted by the contrastiveness constraint. Therefore, syllable reduction has to obey the directionality constraint and the contrastiveness constraint.

R. Huang (2010) proposes that a-not-AB forms are derived from conjunction reduction followed by syllable reduction. Both J. Huang (1988, 2010) and R. Huang (2010) assume that (19a) will be the origin structure of the a-not-AB form. The identical complement 教拳¹¹ *jiao quan* ‘teaching martial arts’ occupies the right branch of the tree and thus conjunction reduction applies in backward direction to delete the complement 教拳 *jiao quan* ‘teaching martial arts’ in the affirmative to give (19b) as an A-not-AB form. Then the identical syllables on the right edge in the coordinate 合適不合適 *heshi-bu-heshi* ‘suitable-not-suitable’ are 適 *shi*. Therefore, syllable reduction applies to delete the syllable 適 *shi* in the affirmative to give (19c). Dai’s prosodic domain formation rule predicates that the syllables in the noun phrase 這裡 *zheli* ‘here’, the adjective 合適 *heshi* ‘suitable’ and the verb phrase 教拳 *jiao quan* ‘teaching martial arts’ in (19c’) will be assigned morphosyntactic binary branchings from left to right to give (19d). There are still several syllables remaining (i.e. 你 *nei* ‘you’, 看 *kan* ‘look’, 合 *he* ‘suitable’ and 不 *bu* ‘not’) in (19d), therefore, the remaining syllables join together from left to right to give (19e). So, the a-not-AB form obeys the bisyllabification rhythm rule as well.

¹¹ The word 拳 *quan* literally means ‘fist’ but it can also mean ‘martial art’. Chinese martial arts usually use 拳 *quan* to collocate with different word to form a noun phrase expressing traits (少林拳 *Shaolinquan*), styles (內家拳 *neijiaquan*) or geographical association (北拳 *beiquan*). Therefore, 教拳 *jiao quan* is translated as ‘teaching martial arts’.

(19) a) **Root:**

你 看 這裡 [合適 [教 拳]] [不合適 [教 拳]]?
ni kan zheli heshi jiao quan bu-heshi jiao quan
you see here **suitable** teaching fist **not-suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club (or) not suitable for your martial club.’

b) **Applying Conjunction Reduction:**

你 看 這裡 [合適 [_____]] [不合適 [教 拳]]?
ni kan zheli heshi bu-heshi jiao quan
you see here **suitable** **not-suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable (for your martial club) (or) not suitable for your martial club.’

b’) **A-not-AB Form:**

你 看 這裡 [合適] [不合適 [教 拳]]?
ni kan zheli heshi -bu-heshi jiao quan
you see here **suitable-not-suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable (for your martial club) (or) not suitable for your martial club.’

c) **Applying Syllable Reduction:**

你 看 這裡 [合__] [不合適 [教 拳]]?
ni kan zheli he bu-heshi jiao quan
you see here **suit(able)** **not-suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club.’

c’) **a-not-AB Form:**

你 看 這裡 合 不 合適 教 拳 ?
ni kan zheli he-bu-heshi jiao quan
you see here **suit(able)-not-suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club.’

d) 你 看 [這裡] 合 不 [合適] [教 拳] ?

ni kan zheli he-bu heshi jiao quan
you see here **suit(able)-not suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club.’

- e) [你 看][這裡] [合不][合適] [教 拳] ?
ni kan zheli he-bu heshi jiao quan
 you see here **suit(able)-not suitable** teaching fist

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club.’

4.2.4 a-not-A Forms

According to R. Huang (2010), syllable reduction can apply alone in an a-not-A form like (4) (equivlant to (20e) in here). J. Huang (1988, 2010) and R. Huang (2010) assume (20a) will be the origin structure of (20e). In (20a), the complement does not appear in the question and hence conjunction reduction does not apply in (20a). The identical syllables on the right edge in the coordinate phrase 方便不方便 *fangbian-bu-fangbian* ‘convenient-not-convenient’ is 便 *bian*, so syllable reduction applies to delete the syllable 便 *bian* in backward direction to give (20b). Dai’s prosodic domain formation rule will again assign morphosyntactic binary branchings from left to right in the verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’, the pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’ with a silent beat and the adverb 方便 *fangbian* ‘convenient’ in (20b) as to give (20c). In the audio, there is a silent beat after the pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’. So the pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’ joins this phonological empty slot to form a compound binary foot. There are still several syllables remaining in (20c), therefore, the remaining syllables join together to give (20d). Only the initial monosyllable 不 *bu* ‘not’ remains in (20d), so it joins the neighboring foot 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ to give (20e). This illustrates that a-not-A forms obey the bisyllabification rhythm rule as well.

- (20) a) 不 知 道 你 [方 便][不 方 便] ?
bu zhidao ni fangbian-bu-fangbian
 not know you **convenient-not-convenient**

‘Is that all right with you?’

- b) 不 知 道 你 [方 ____][不 方 便] ?
bu zhidao ni fang____ -bu-fangbian
 not know you **convenient-not-convenient**

‘Is that all right with you?’

- c) 不 [知 道] [你 (a silent beat)] 方 不 [方 便] ?
bu zhidao ni *fang-bu-fangbian*
not know you convenient-not-convenient
- ‘Is that all right with you?’
- d) 不 [知 道] [你 (a silent beat)] [方 不][方 便] ?
bu zhidao ni *fang-bu-fangbian*
not know you convenient-not-convenient
- ‘Is that all right with you?’
- e) [不 [知 道]] [你 (a silent beat)] [方 不][方 便] ?
bu zhidao ni *fang-bu-fangbian*
not know you convenient-not-convenient
- ‘Is that all right with you?’

4.3 Differences between Cantonese, Mandarin and Written Chinese in A-not-A Questions

Cantonese shares much vocabulary with Mandarin Chinese, but the two languages are not mutually intelligible because of pronunciation (e.g. the first syllable of the compound nouns 會議 *wui6ji5* ‘meeting’ and 會計 *wui6gai3* ‘accounting’ in Cantonese is the same pronunciation *wui6*, however, they are different in Mandarin. The first syllable is pronounced as *hui* for the compound word 會議 *huiyi* ‘meeting’ but it is pronounced as *kuai* for the compound word 會計 *kuaiji* ‘accounting’), morphological (e.g. the compound noun ‘quality’ in Cantonese is 質素 *zat1sou3* but in Mandarin is 素質 *suzhi*), and also lexical differences (e.g. the word ‘sleepy’ in Cantonese is 眼瞓 *ngaan5fan3* but in Mandarin is 困 *kun*). Sentence structure, in particular the placement of verbs, sometimes differs between the two languages. For example, the adverb 先 *sin3/xian* ‘first’ places at the sentence final in Cantonese (21a) but it places in-between the auxiliary verb 要 *yao* ‘need’ and the main verb 去 *qu* ‘go’ in Mandarin Chinese (21b). One of the most notable differences between Cantonese and Mandarin is how the spoken word is written; with Mandarin the spoken word is written as such, whereas with Cantonese there may not be a direct written word matching what was said. This results in the situation in which a Mandarin and Cantonese text almost look the same, but both are pronounced differently. In the attested data, not only did

Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese differ, Mandarin Chinese and the written Chinese also had grammatical and lexical differences. In this section, I will mainly discuss the grammatical and lexical differences in the data between Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and the written Chinese.

- (21) a) 我要去洗手間先。
ngo5 jiu3 heoi3 sai3sau2gaan1 sin3
 I need go washroom **first** Cantonese
- b) 我要先去洗手間。
wo yao xian qu xishoujian
 I need **first** go washroom Mandarin
- ‘I need to go to washroom’

4.3.1 Lexical Differences

4.3.1.1 ‘can’

There are a number of verbs to express ‘can’ in either Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese or written Chinese. In (22a) and (22c), the Cantonese audio and the Chinese subtitles use the same disyllabic modal verb 可以 *ho2ji5/keyi* to express ‘can’ but the Mandarin audio uses the monosyllabic modal verb 能 *neng*. In this case, the speaker asks the journalist to write an article about him then he uses modal verbs 可以 *ho2ji5/keyi* or 能 *neng* to express the possibility. As the Cantonese and written Chinese use the disyllabic modal verb 可以 *ho2ji5/keyi* and the Mandarin Chinese uses the monosyllabic modal verb 能 *neng* then the forms are also different. The A-not-A question is a-not-AB form in Cantonese and written Chinese but Mandarin Chinese is A-not-AB form.

- (22) a) ...你可唔可以都幫我寫篇報導？ (Cantonese)
nei ho2-m4-ho2ji5 dou1 bong1 ngo5 se2 pin1 bou3dou6
 you can-not-can also help I write CL article
- b) ...你能不能幫我也寫篇報導？ (Mandarin)
ni neng-bu-neng bang wo ye xie pian baodao
 you can-not-can help I also write CL article

- c) ... 你 可 不 可 以 都 幫 我 寫 篇 報 導 ? (written Chinese)
ni ke-bu-keyi dou bang wo xie pian baodao
 you can-not-can also help I write CL article

‘... Can you write about me too?’

The verbs 識 *sik1* ‘know’ in Cantonese or 懂 *dong* ‘know’ in written Chinese are used for ‘can’ in the sense of being able to do something like (23a) and (23c) respectively. In this case, the speaker asks the hearer whether he can fight. The verbs 識 *sik1* ‘know’ in the Cantonese audio and 懂 *dong* ‘understand’ in the Chinese subtitles are used for ‘can’, only the Mandarin audio (23b) uses 會 *hui* to express ‘be able to’ explicitly. In this case, all versions use the monosyllabic verbs and do not contain an overt complement. Hence all of the A-not-A questions have an A-not-A form.

- (23) a) ... 你 識 唔 識 呀 ? (Cantonese)
nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1
 you know-not-know SFP

- b) ... 你 會 不 會 ? (Mandarin)
ni hui-bu-hui
 you be.able.to-not-be.able.to

- c) ... 你 懂 不 懂 ? (written Chinese)
ni dong-bu-dong
 you understand-not-understand

‘... Can you fight?’

4.3.1.2 ‘be familiar with somebody or something’

The Cantonese verb 識 *sik1* ‘know’ is used to express the meaning of ‘be familiar with somebody’ like (24a). However, the Mandarin audio uses the disyllabic verb 認識 *renshi* ‘know’ (see (24b)) instead of the monosyllabic verb 識 *sik1* ‘know’ in the Cantonese audio to express ‘familiar with him’. Therefore, the A-not-A question takes an A-not-AB form in Cantonese but an a-not-AB form in Mandarin Chinese.

- (24) a) ... 你 識 唔 識 佢 嘅 ? (Cantonese)
nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 keoi5 gaa3
 you know-not-know he SFP
- b) ... 你 認 不 認 識 他 ? (Mandarin)
ni ren-bu-rensi ta
 you know-not-know he
- ‘... Do you know him?’

Moreover, the Cantonese verb 識 *sik1* ‘know’ is used to express ‘be familiar with and understand something’ like (25a). Examples (25b) and (25c) show that the Mandarin audio uses the verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ and the Chinese subtitles have 懂 *dong* ‘understand’ instead of the Cantonese verb 識 *sik1* ‘know’ to indicate the meaning of ‘the rules that everyone knows and accepts’. In Cantonese and written Chinese the monosyllabic verbs 識 *sik1* ‘know’ and 懂 *dong* ‘understand’ form questions with an A-not-AB pattern whereas in Mandarin Chinese the disyllabic verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ yields an a-not-AB form.

- (25) a) 你 識 唔 識 規 矩 嘅 ? (Cantonese)
nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 kwailgeoi2 gaa3
 you know-not-know rule SFP
- b) 你 知 不 知 道 規 矩 ? (Mandarin)
ni zhi-bu-zhidao gui ju
 you know-not-know rule
- c) 你 懂 不 懂 規 矩 ? (written Chinese)
ni dong-bu-dong gui ju
 you understand-not-understand rule
- ‘Do you know the rules?’

4.3.1.3 ‘ask someone to tell you a piece of information’

When the speaker asks someone to tell him/her a piece of information, Cantonese speakers usually use the monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’ but Mandarin speakers use the disyllabic verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’. In (26), the speaker wants to ask the hearer whether he knows his brother is dead and hence the speaker uses the monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’ in the Cantonese audio and the disyllabic verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ in the Mandarin audio and the

Chinese subtitles as well. Furthermore, the subject 你 *ni* ‘you’ is missing in the Chinese subtitles (26c). The Cantonese question with the monosyllabic verb 知 *zi1* ‘know’ takes the form A-not-AB, while the Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese questions with the disyllabic verb 知道 *zhidao* ‘know’ has an a-not-AB form.

- (26) a) 你 知 唔 知 你 阿 哥 死 咗 ？ (Cantonese)
nei5 zi1-m4-zi1 nei5 aa3 go1 sei2-zo2
 you know-not-know you Ah brother die-PFV
- b) 你 知 不 知 道 你 哥 死 了 ？ (Mandarin)
ni zhi-bu-zhidao ni ge si-le
 you know-not-know you brother die-PFV
- c) 知 不 知 道 你 哥 死 了 ？ (written Chinese)
zhi-bu-zhidao ni ge si-le
 know-not-know you brother die-PFV
- ‘You know your brother is dead?’

4.3.1.4 ‘be here’

Mandarin (27b) and written Chinese (27c) simply use the monosyllabic word 在 *zai* to express ‘be here’, but Cantonese uses the disyllabic word 喺度 *hai2dou6* like (27a). So the A-not-A question takes an a-not-A form in Cantonese but an A-not-A form in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese.

- (27) a) 葉 問 屋 企 人 喺 唔 喺 度 呀 ？ (Cantonese)
jip6 man6 uk1kei2jan4 hai2-m4-hai2dou6 aa3
 Ip Man family be.here-not-be.here SFP
- b) 葉 問 家 人 在 不 在 呀 ？ (Mandarin)
ye wen jiaren zai-bu-zai ya
 Ip Man family be.here-not-be.here SFP
- c) 葉 問 家 人 在 不 在 ？ (written Chinese)
ye wen jiaren zai-bu-zai
 Ip Man family be.here-not-be.here
- ‘May I speak to Ip Man’s family?’

4.3.2 Grammatical Differences

4.3.2.1 Right dislocation

In general, the word order in Chinese sentences is that the predicate follows the subject. However, in (28), the subject 你們 *nimen* ‘you’ follows the predicate 都讀了嗎 *dou du-le ma* ‘did (you) read it’ as the speaker puts the emphasis on the predicate. According to Hu (2003, p.391) these kinds of sentences usually have a significant pause in-between the predicate and the subject.

- (28) 都 讀 了 嗎 , 你 們 ?
dou du-le ma nimen
 already read-PFV Q you

‘Did you read it?’

Mandarin
(Hu 2003:391(2))

In the attested data, we also find instances of right dislocation in A-not-A questions. The noun phrase 你 *nei5/ni* ‘you’ occupies the sentence final position in Cantonese (29a) and Mandarin Chinese (28b) appears in the sentence initial position as subject in written Chinese (29c). The A-not-A sequence in the Cantonese or Mandarin audios seems to be emphasized in this case.

- (29) a) 乖 唔 乖 啊 你 ? (Cantonese)
gwaai1-m4-gwaai1 aa3 nei5
 good-not-good SFP **you**
- b) 乖 不 乖 啊 你 ? (Mandarin)
guai-bu-guai a ni
 good-not-good SFP **you**
- c) 你 乖 不 乖 ? (written Chinese)
ni *guai-bu-guai*
you good-not-good

‘Did you behave?’

Interestingly, the sentence-final particle 啊 *aa3/a* also appears in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese but the written Chinese version does not contain any sentence-final particle.

4.3.2.2 到 *dou2* ‘can’

In Cantonese, 到 *dou2* can imply the meaning ‘can’, as illustrated in (30a). In this case, 到 *dou2* is inserted between the two components of the verb 起身 *hei2san1* ‘stand up’ to express the meaning ‘someone can stand up’. In the Mandarin audio, on the other hand, the modal verb 能 *neng* ‘can’ appears before the verb phrase 站起來 *zhanqilai* ‘stand up’, as shown in (30b). In (30b), the predicate 站起來 *zhanqilai* ‘stand up’ follows the A-not-A constituent 能 不能 *neng-bu-neng* ‘can-not-can’ to give an A-not-AB form. However, the A-not-A constituent in Cantonese has an a-not-A form as only the first syllable 起 *hei2* of the verb 起身 *hei2san1* ‘stand up’ is used in the affirmative and 到 *dou2* is inserted between the two components of the verb 起身 *hei2san1* ‘stand up’ in the negative (30a).

- (30) a) 唔知 葉師傅 起 唔起 到 身 呢 ? (Cantonese)
m4 zi1 jip6 si1fu2 hei2-m4-hei2 dou2 san1 ne1
 not know Ip master up-not-up been.to body SFP
- b) 不 知道葉師傅 能 不 能 站 起來 ? (Mandarin)
bu zhidao ye shifu neng-bu-neng zhanqilai
 not know Ip master can-not-can stand up
- ‘Can Master Ip stand up?’

4.3.2.3 ‘need’

In Chinese, the modal verb 要 *yao* (pronounced as *jiu3* in Cantonese) ‘need’ is used to express necessity. Example (31) is extracted from a scene where the host interprets the instructions for the referee and there is no difference between the Cantonese audio, the Mandarin audio or the Chinese subtitles. In this case, the modal verb 要 *jiu3/yao* ‘need’ is used in a declarative sentence, and collocates with the modal adverb 一定 *jat1ding6/yiding* ‘definitely’ in all three versions to strengthen the meaning ‘must’. However, Cantonese seems to use another modal verb 使 *sai2* ‘need’ instead of 要 *jiu3* ‘need’ to form an A-not-A question like (32a). In (32b) and (32c), the modal verb 要 *yao* ‘need’ is used to form the A-not-A question in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles. The indirect object pronoun 你 *nei5/ni* ‘you’ is inserted in-between the verb 煮 *zyu2/zhu* ‘cook’ and the noun 飯 *faan6/fan* ‘rice’ in the Cantonese audio (32a) and the Chinese subtitles (32c) to express the meaning

‘cook dinner for you’. It looks like the pattern in the Chinese subtitles may be affected the Cantonese pattern, since in the Mandarin audio (32b), the pronoun 你 *nei5/ni* ‘you’ collocates with the preposition 給 *gei* ‘for’ and precedes the main verb 煮 *zhu* ‘cook’.

- (31) 一 定 要 聽 我 指 揮
jat1ding6 jiu3 teng1 ngo5 zi2fai1 (Cantonese)
yiding yao ting wo zhihui (Mandarin)
 definitely **need** listen I command

‘You have to follow my instructions at all time’

- (32) a) 咁 仲 使 唔 使 煮 你 飯 啊 ? (Cantonese)
gam2 zung2 sai2-m4-sai2 zyu2 nei5 faan6 aa3
 so still need-not-need cook you rice SFP
- b) 那 還 要 不 要 給 你 煮 飯 呀 ? (Mandarin)
na hai yao-bu-yao gei ni zhu fan ya
 so still need-not-need for you cook rice SFP
- c) 那 還 要 不 要 煮 你 飯 ? (written Chinese)
na hai yao-bu-yao zhu ni fan
 so still need-not-need cook you rice

‘Should I cook dinner then?’

In (32a), the A-not-A sequence 使唔使 *sai2-m4-sai2* also can be replaced with 要唔要 *jiu3-m4-jiu3*. So the response to (32a) could be 要 *jiu3* ‘need’ or the main verb 煮 *zyu* ‘cook’. If the response is negative, we often reply with 唔使 *m4sai2* ‘no need’. Example (33a) is an instance of an A-not-A question involving 要唔要 *jiu3-m4-jiu3* and Ip Man responds with 唔使 *m4sai2* ‘No thanks’ to the speaker.

- (33) a) 侍 應 : 蛋 撻 要 唔 要 呀 ?
si6jing3 daan6taat1 jiu3-m4-jiu3 aa3
 waiter egg tart want-not-want SFP
- ‘Waiter’ ‘You want an egg tart?’

- b) 葉 問 : 唔 使 喇
 jip6 man6 *m4-sai2 laa3*
 Ip Man no-need SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘No thanks.’

4.3.2.4 ‘suitable + use’ or ‘enough + use’

Example (34) contains two A-not-A questions which illustrate two main differences between Cantonese, Mandarin and written Chinese. Firstly, the adjective ‘suitable’ is expressed by the monosyllabic adjective 啱 *ngaam1* in Cantonese (34a) but Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese use a disyllabic adjective. Mandarin Chinese uses 合適 *heshi* but written Chinese uses 適合 *shihe*, as shown in (34b) and (34c) respectively. Both Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese use the same syllables/morphemes 合 *he* and 適 *shi* in the disyllabic adjective, however, the order of the syllables/morphemes is different. Hence the first A-not-A question in Cantonese has an A-not-AB form but Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese have an a-not-AB form. Secondly, the verb 用 *jung6/yong* ‘use’ occurs in different A-not-A questions in Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese. In this case, 用 *jung6/yong* ‘use’ is used to express ‘purpose’ and hence refers to the verb phrase 教拳 *gaau3kyun4/jiaoquan* ‘teaching martial arts’ (i.e. the topic). The verb phrase 教拳 *gaau3kyun4/jiaoquan* ‘teaching martial arts’ comes after the subject 你 *nei5* ‘you’ in Cantonese (34a) but follows the A-not-A constituent 合不合適 *he-bu-heshi* or 適不適合 *shi-bu-shihe* ‘suitable-not-suitable’ in Mandarin Chinese (34b) and written Chinese (34c). The verb 用 *jung6* ‘use’ is used after 啱唔啱 *ngaam1-m4-ngaam1* ‘suitable-not-suitable’ to refer back to the topic when the verb phrase 教拳 *gaau3kyun4* ‘teaching martial arts’ comes after the subject 你 *nei5* ‘you’ in (34a). However, the verb phrase 教拳 *jiaoquan* ‘teaching martial arts’ appears sentence finally in (34b) and (34c). So the verb 用 *yong* ‘use’ occurs in the second A-not-A question and collocates with the adjective 夠 *gou* ‘enough’ to refer back to the topic 教拳 *jiaoquan* ‘teaching fist’ in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese. Yjis means that the second A-not-A question in Cantonese is A-not-A whereas in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese the form is A-not-AB form.

- (34) a) 睇吓你教拳啱唔啱用喇吓？ (Cantonese)
tai2- haa5 nei5 gaau3 kyun4 ngaam1-m4-ngaam1 jung6 laa3 haa2
 look-DEL you teaching fist suitable-not-suitable use SFP SFP

嘩吓！都幾大吓喎，夠唔夠呢？
waa1 haa2 dou1 gei2 daai6-haa5 wo3 gau3-m4-gau3 ne1
 wow SFP also quite big-DEL SFP enough-not-enough SFP

- b) 你看這裡合不合適教拳？ (Mandarin)
ni kan zheli he-bu-heshi jiao quan
 youu look here suitable-not-suitable teaching fist

嘩！這裡真的好大啊，夠不夠用？
hua zheli zhen de hao da a gou-bu-gou yong
 wow here really LP very big SFP enough-not-enough use

- c) 你看這裡適不適合教拳？ (written Chinese)
ni kan zheli shi-bu-shihe jiao quan
 you look here suitable-not-suitable teaching fist

地方挺大，夠不夠用呢？
difang ting da gou-bu-gou yong ne
 place very big enough-not-enough use SFP

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club. It’s pretty spacious. Is it big enough?’

Example (34a) also contains an instance of right dislocation in the first A-not-A question. The subject pronoun 你 *nei5* ‘you’ follows the verb 睇吓 *tai2haa5* ‘look’. However, the subject pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’ does not dislocate in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese.

4.3.3 A-not-A Questions with Sentence-Final Particles

As the above examples illustrate, A-not-A questions tend to contain sentence-final particles in Cantonese, but not in Mandarin or written Chinese. Table 4.5 clearly shows that the majority of A-not-A questions in the Cantonese audio occur with sentence-final particles whereas most of the A-not-A questions in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles do not contain sentence-final particles. In the Cantonese audio, the following sentence-final particles appear in A-not-A questions: 呀 *aa1*, 呀 *aa3*, 呢 *ni1*, 嚟 *gaa3*, 喇吓 *laa3haa2* and 咁嘅 *aa1naa4* (see (35)-(36) for additional examples). Only the sentence-final particle 呀 *ya*

appears in A-not-A questions in the Mandarin audio, as in (37), and only the sentence-final particle 呢 *ne* occurs in the Chinese subtitles (38).

Table 4.5 Distrubtion of A-not-A questions excluding tag questions contain sentence-final particles

	A-not-A Questions (excluding tag questions)		Total
	with SFP	without SFP	
Cantonese	33 (23.46%)	9 (7.26%)	42
Mandarin	15 (8.38%)	50 (26.82%)	65
Chinese Subtitle	1 (0.56%)	50 (33.52%)	51
Total	49	109	

For Cantonese by Mandarin, Fisher's exact test yields $p = 1.0E-6$, $p < 0.001$

For Cantonese by Chinese Subtitles, Fisher's exact test yields $p = 0$, $p < 0.001$

- (35) ... 你 識 唔 識 規 矩 囉 ? (Cantonese)
nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 kwai1geoi2 gaa3
 you know-not-know rule **SFP**
 ‘Do you know the rules?’
- (36) 睇 吓 你 教 拳 啱 唔 啱 用 喇 吓 ? (Cantonese)
tai2-haa2 nei2 gaau3 kyun4 ngaam1-m4-ngaam1 jung6 laa3 haa2
 look-DEL you teach fist suitable-not-suitable use **SFP SFP**
 ‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club.’
- (37) 葉 問 家 人 在 不 在 呀 ? (Mandarin)
ye wen jiaren zai-bu-zai ya
 Ip Man family in here-not-in here **SFP**
 ‘May I speak to Ip Man’s family?’

- (38) ... 地方 挺 大 , 夠 不 夠 用 呢 ? (Chinese subtitles)
difang ting da gou-bu-gou yong ne
 place quite big enough-not-enough use **SFP**

‘It’s pretty spacious. Is it big enough?’

The above instances suggest that the syntactic differences of A-not-A questions in Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese are often affected by morphological differences, lexical differences and grammatical differences.

4.4 Speech Acts and other Pragmatic Functions of A-not-A Questions

In this section, I mainly discuss A-not-A questions in Cantonese because the films took places in Foshan and Hong Kong where Cantonese is the majority language. Also, Cantonese is my native language, which makes it easier for me to provide insights into how native speakers when perform different speech acts uttering A-not-A questions.

You may often hear the question ‘How’s your day?’ whenever you are. For example, parents always ask their children ‘How’s your day?’ when they come home after school. In this case, this question shows that parents are interested and ready to listen what their children did at the school. So parents use ‘How’s your day?’ to show they care and the question functions as their opening gambit. On the other hand, this question may also function as a greeting. For example, in the supermarket, the cashiers say ‘Hi there. How’s your day?’ when the customers check out. In this situation, the cashiers and the customers are often complete strangers to each other. Therefore the cashiers do not actually want to strike up a conversation and hear how the day went. They merely use the question as a greeting.¹²

4.4.1 Expressive - Expressing concern

Similarly, there are several questions Cantonese speakers use to greet someone or to start a conversation. The most likely question to be uttered by family members (especially mother or wife) is 今日𢇇唔𢇇呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’. This A-not-A question ostensibly asks whether the hearer was tired. However, native Cantonese speakers never seem to respond with 𢇇 *gui6* ‘tired’ or 唔𢇇 *m4-gui6* ‘not tired’. In the attested data, there are two instances of the A-not-A question 今日𢇇唔𢇇呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6*

¹² This example was inspired by Sperber and Wilson (1995).

aa3 ‘Were you tired today?’ but the replies to these instances are not the same. In (39), when Cheung Wing-Sing (Ip Man’s wife) asks Ip Man 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’, he does not answer 𢦏 *gui6* ‘tired’ or 唔𢦏 *m4-gui6* ‘not tired’ but he utters 倒吓煤嗟，有幾𢦏呀? *dou2haa5 mui4 ze1 jau5 gei2 gui6 aa3* ‘Pouring coal is not tiring at all’. Why does Ip Man give this response? We need to look back at their earlier conversation where Cheung Wing-Sing gets sick and worries about how to make a living. Ip Man tells her he can go to work so there is no need to worry about that. However, Ip Man has never worked before and thus Cheung Wing-Sing queries whether he can find a job. When Cheung Wing-Sing asks 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ as Ip Man gets home, he knows that his wife is eager to hear whether he got a job. Hence, he utters 倒吓煤嗟 *dou2haa5 mui4 ze1* ‘pouring coal’ to tell her what kind of job he does now and also uses the rhetorical question 有幾𢦏呀? *jau5 gei2 gui6 aa3* ‘how tired?’ to emphasise that pouring coal is not hard work.

- (39) a) 張 永 成 : 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀?
zoeng1 wing5 sing4 gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3
 Cheung Wing Sing today tired-not-tired SFP
 ‘Cheung Wing-Sing’ ‘Were you tired today?’
- b) 葉 問 : 倒吓煤嗟，有幾𢦏呀?
jip6 man6 dou2-haa5 mui4 ze1 jau5 gei2 gui6 aa3
 Ip Man pour-DEL coal SFP have how many tired SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘Pouring coal is not tiring at all.’

Example (40) is another instance of the A-not-A question 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ with the same speaker and addressee. Cheung Wing-Sing discovers that Ip Man is sad and his hands got hurt as well, so she asks him 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ with a worried expression on her face. Ip Man does not respond to her immediately and just tells her what he is going to do. In this case, the speaker uses this A-not-A question to show that she wants to know what happened to him and to be a good listener.

- (40) a) 張 永 成 : 今日 𢳓 唔 𢳓 呀 ?
 zoeng1 wing5 sing4 gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3
 Cheung Wing Sing today tired-not-tired SFP
 ‘Cheung Wing-Sing’ ‘Were you tired today?’
- b) 葉 問 : 洗 個 面 先
 jip6 man6 sai2 go3 min6 sin1
 Ip Man wash CL face first
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘Wash my face first’

The above examples suggested that speakers can use the A-not-A question 今日𢳓唔𢳓呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ to show their concern or care indirectly. At the same time, the A-not-A question also functions as an opening gambit.

In (41a), on the other hand, Cheung Tin-Chi asks his son directly 隻眼仲痛唔痛 *zek3 ngaan5 zung tung3-m4-tung3* ‘does it hurt’ and his son replies with the negative counterpart 唔痛 *m4tung3* ‘no’ in (41b) for the question. In this case, the speaker not only asks about his eye injury but also shows he cares. Two kids suffered eye injuries in the fight. When Cheung Tin-Chi saw his son at Ip Man’s home, Cheung just asked Cheung Fong to apologise to Ip’s son, but now Cheung Tin-Chi uses the A-not-A question 隻眼仲痛唔痛 *zek3 ngaan5 zung tung3-m4-tung3* ‘does it hurt’ to show that he knows his son got hurt as well and cares about him.

- (41) a) 張 天 志 : 畀 我 睇 吓 , 隻 眼 仲 痛 唔 痛 ?
 zoeng1 tin1 zi3 bei2 ngo5 tai2-haa5 zek3 ngaan5 zung6 tung3-m4-tung3
 Cheung Tin Chi give I look DEL CL eye still pain-not-pain
 ‘Cheung Tin-Chi’ ‘Give me a look... does it hurt?’
- b) 張 峰 : 唔 痛 嘅
 zoeng1 fung1 m4tung3 laa3
 Cheung Fong not-pain SFP
 ‘Cheung Fong’ ‘No.’

4.4.2 Directives

4.4.2.1 Challenging somebody

Some of the examples in my data suggest that the speakers use an A-not-A question to express their wants or desire. For example, Wong Leung is putting up the posters for the martial arts club, but Cheng Wai-Kei peels the posters off the wall and says Wong cannot do that. Therefore, Wong Leung reacted angrily and utters the A-not-A question 想唔想知道乜嘢係詠春呀 *soeng2-m4-soeng2 zildou3 mat1je5 hai6 wing6 ceon1 aa3* ‘want to know what Wing Chun is’ as shown in (42a). In this case, the speaker is not happy with the behaviour of Cheng Wai-Kei and thus Wong Leung wants to have a fight with him. So the A-not-A question 想唔想知道乜嘢係詠春呀 *soeng2-m4-soeng2 zildou3 mat1je5 hai6 wing6 ceon1 aa3* ‘want to know what Wing Chun is’ is uttered as a challenge here. Consequently, Cheng Wai-Kei clearly states ‘want to have a fight’ with the rhetorical question 即係攞打喇 *zik1hai6 lau3 daa2 laa3* ‘you want me to beat you’ as shown in (42b).

- (42) a) 黃 樑 : 想 唔 想 知 道 乜 嘢 係 詠 春 呀 ?
wong4 leong4 *soeng2-m4-soeng2 zildou3 mat1je5 hai6 wing6 ceon1 aa3*
Wong Leung want-not-want know what be Wing Chun SFP
‘Wing Leung’ ‘Want to know what Wing Chun is?’
- b) 鄭 偉 基 : 即 係 攞 打 喇 ?
zeng6 wai5 gei1 *zik1hai6 lau3 daa2 laa3*
Cheng Wai Kei exactly strangle fight SFP
‘Cheng Wai-Kei’ ‘You want me to beat you?’

4.4.2.2 Suggestion –Trying to make addressee buy more

In Hong Kong, when you go shopping or have a meal in a restaurant, the staff will always ask whether you want something that is not on your menu. Most of the retail shops and restaurants use this strategy to sell their products. For instance, in (43b), the waiter attempts to encourage Ip Man to buy egg tarts when he orders two pieces of cake. However, the waiter fails this time as Ip Man replies with the negative counterpart 唔使 *m4sai2* ‘no’. In this case, the negative counterpart 唔要 *m4jiu3* ‘don’t want’ is equivalent to 唔使 *m4sai2*

‘don’t need’. Sometimes the A-not-A constituent 要唔要 *jiu3-m4-jiu3* ‘want-not-want’ can be replaced by 使唔使 *sai2-m4-sai2* ‘need-not-need’.

- (43) a) 葉 問 : 唔 該 你 , 畀 兩 件 蛋 糕 過 我 啊
jip6 man6 m4goi1nei5 bei2 leong5 gin6 daan6goul gwo3 ngo5 aa2
 Ip Man excuse me give two CL cake cross I SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘Excuse me, two pieces of cake, please.’
- b) 侍 應 : 蛋 撻 要 唔 要 呀 ?
si6jing3 daan6taat1 jiu3-m4-jiu3 aa3
 waiter egg tart want-not-want SFP
 ‘Waiter’ ‘You want an egg tart?’
- c) 葉 問 : 唔 使 喇
jip6 man6 m4-sai2 laa3
 Ip Man no-need SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘No thanks.’

4.4.2.3 Request – Asking to speak to someone

When we are asking to speak to someone, we usually say ‘May I speak to John, please?’ or ‘Is John there?’ Both questions function as a request to speak to John. The former question is a direct request and the latter one is an indirect request. In Cantonese, we usually just use 約翰喺唔喺度 *joek3hon6 hai2-m4-hai2dou6* ‘Is John there?’ to signal that we want to speak to someone. For instance, in (44), the police goes to Ip Man’s home and asks his family to bail him after his arrest. In (44a), the police officer introduces himself when he is knocking on the door and then Cheung Wing-Sing responds ‘what’s the matter’ in (44b). The policeman asks 葉問屋企人喺唔喺度呀 *jip6 man6 uk1kei2jan4 hai2-m4-hai2dou6 aa3* ‘Is Ip Man’s family there’, but Cheung Wing-Sing’s response ‘what’s the matter’ shows that she recognizes this as a request to speak with Ip Man’s family. When Cheung Wing-Sing responds she is Ip Man’s wife, the policeman tells her that her husband has been arrested and she needs to bail him as soon as possible (see (44d)-(44e)). Example (44c) suggests that the A-not-A constituent 喺唔喺度 *hai2-m4-hai2dou6* ‘be here-not-be here’ has the function of an indirect request, and this is why it is translated as ‘May I speak to Ip Man’s family’ in the English subtitles.

- (44) a) 警 察 : 差 人 , 開 門 , 開 門 !
ging2caat3 caai1jan4 hoi1 mun4 hoi1 mun4
 police police open door open door
 ‘Police’ ‘Police! Open up! Open up!’
- b) 張 永 成 : 乜 嘢 事 呀 ?
zoeng1 wing5 sing4 mat1je5 si6 aa3
 Cheung Wing Sing what matter SFP
 ‘Cheung Wing-Sing’ ‘What’s the matter?’
- c) 警 察 : 葉 問 屋 企 人 喺 唔 喺 度 呀 ?
ging2caat3 jip6 man6 uk1kei2jan4 hai2-m4-hai2dou6 aa3
 police Ip Man family be.here-not-be.here SFP
 ‘Police’ ‘May I speak to Ip Man’s family?’
- d) 張 永 成 : 我 係 佢 太 太
zoeng1 wing5 sing4 ngo5 hai6 keoi5taai3taai2
 Cheung Wing Sing I be his wife
 ‘Cheung Wing-Sing’ ‘I am his wife.’
- e) 警 察 : 你 老 公 打 交 傷 人 ,
ging2caat3 nei5lou5gung1 daa2gaau1 soeng1jan4
 police your husband fight injury.somebody
 ‘Police’ 俾 我 哋 拉 咗 返 去 , 你
bei2 ngo5dei6 laai1-zo2 faanheoi3 nei5
 by we arrest-PFV go.back you
 盡 快 帶 錢 保 釋 佢 喇
zeon6faai3 daai3 cin4 bou2sik1 keoi5 laa3
 as.soon.as.possible bring money bail he SFP
 ‘Your husband’s arrested for injuring others. Please
 bail him out as soon as possible.’

4.4.3 Representatives - Expressing Speaker’s Assumption

Example (45b) suggests that the A-not-A question 你識唔識 *nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1* ‘Can you fight’ is used to express the speaker’s suspicion. Cheung Fung is practising with the wooden man which is used in Chinese martial art training. In general, ordinary people do not have a

wooden man at home and thus, the wooden man signals that its owner knows martial arts. Ip Man commends Cheung Fung on his practice and asks who taught him. Cheung Fung is very proud to tell him that his father taught him and asks Ip Man whether he can fight. In this case, the speaker uses that the A-not-A question 你識唔識 *nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1* ‘Can you fight’ to confirm his suspicion that Ip Man knows martial arts. At the same time, the speaker may not want to believe that the father of his classmate knows martial arts like his father. May be for that reason, Cheung Fung uses the sentence-final particle 呀 *aa1* to collocate with the A-not-A question 你識唔識 *nei5 sik1-m4-sik1* ‘Can you fight’ expressing disbelief. According to Kwok (1984), the sentence-final particle 呀 *aa1* is used to modify the intonation to show varying degrees of disbelief or surprise. So Ip Man politely responds and says modestly that he has a limited knowledge of martial art.

- (45) a) 葉 問 : 張 峰 , 打 得 唔 錯 㗎 ,
jip6 man6 zeong1 fung1 daa2 dak1 m4co3 wo3
 Ip Man Cheung Fung fight ADV not.bad SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ 邊 個 教 你 㗎 ?
bin1go3 gaau3 nei5 gaa3
 who teach you SFP
 ‘Cheung Fong – not bad. Who taught you?’
- b) 張 峰 : 我 爸 爸 教 嘅 , 你 識 唔 識 呀 ?
zoeng1 fung1 ngo5baa4baa1 gaau3 ge3 nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1
 Cheung Fong my father teach SFP you know-not-know SFP
 ‘Cheung Fong’ ‘My dad. Can you fight?’
- c) 葉 問 : 識 少 少 㗎
jip6 man6 sik1 siu2 siu2 laa1
 Ip Man know little little SFP
 ‘Ip Man’ ‘A little’

The above examples suggest that A-not-A questions not only can function as a genuine question and act as directives, expressives and representatives.

4.4.4 A-not-A Questions as Gambits

4.4.4.1 Opening Gambits

In Section 4.4.1, I suggest that the A-not-A question 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ is not a genuine question and the speaker uses it to express her concern. At the same time, the speaker uses the A-not-A question to start the conversation and encourage Ip Man to talk about his day. So, the A-not-A question have functions as an opening gambit that indicates the speaker’s readiness to listen.

- (46) 今 日 𢦏 唔 𢦏 呀 ?
 gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3
 today tired-not-tired SFP

‘Were you tired today?’

4.4.4.2 Communication Control – Do you understand me?

In Cantonese, we usually use tag questions of A-not-A form to check whether the message is being received by the listener. For example, in (47), the host translates the referee’s instructions to Ip Man and says 清唔清楚 *cing1-m4-cing1co2* ‘is that clear’ to check whether Ip Man has understood the instructions. Example (48) is another tag question of A-not-A form 明唔明白 *ming4-m4-ming4baak6* ‘understand-not-understand’, which checks whether the addressee has understood the explanation.

- (47) 一 定 要 聽 我 指 揮 , 清 唔 清 楚 ?
 jat1ding6 jiu3 teng1 ngo5 zi2fail cing1-m4-cing1co2
 definitely need listen I command clear-not-clear

‘You have to follow my instructions at all time, is that clear?’

(48) 你 唔 同 意 , 可 以 棄 權 , 拳 王 將 會 自 動
nei5 m4 tung4ji3 ho2ji5 hei3kyun4 kyun4wong4 zoeng1wui5 zi6dung6
 you not agree can forfeit boxing.champion will automatic

勝 出 , 明 唔 明 白 ?
sing3ceot1 ming4-m4-ming4baak6
 win understand-not-understand

‘If you don’t agree, you’ll forfeit the match. And Twister will be announced the winner. Is that clear?’

Chapter 5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This study set out to examine the syntactic and pragmatic properties of A-not-A questions in Chinese. The four patterns of A-not-A questions attested in my sample are: A-not-A (1), A-not-AB (2), a-not-AB (3) and a-not-A (4).

(1) **A-not-A form:**

… 隻 眼 仲 痛 唔 痛 ?
zek3 ngaan5 zung6 tung3-m4-tung3
CL eye still pain-not-pain

‘... does it hurt?’

(2) **A-not-AB form:**

… 你 知 唔 知 你 自 己 做 緊 乜 嘢 呀 ?
… nei5 zi1-m4-zi1 nei5zi6gei2 zou6-gan2 mat1je5 aa3
… you know-not-know yourself do-CONT what SFP

‘... You know what you’re doing?’

(3) **a-not-AB form:**

我 可 唔 可 以 再 挑 戰 三 個 ?
ngo5 ho2-m4-ho2ji5 zoi3 tiu1zin3 saam1 go3
I can-not-can again challenge three CL

‘Can I fight three more people?’

(4) **a-not-A form:**

… 唔 知 你 方 唔 方 便 呢 ?
… m4 zi1 nei5 fong1-m4-fong1bin6 nel
… not know you convenient-not-convenient SFP

‘... Is that all right with you?’

While AB-not-AB and AB-not-A are also mentioned in the literature, I did not find any examples in my data. In (1), the A-not-A sequence is formed by the monosyllabic intransitive verb 痛 *tung3* ‘pain’ with the negative marker 唔 *m4* ‘not’ as 痛唔痛 *tung3-m4-tung3* ‘pain-

not-pain’. In (2), the complement 你自己做緊乜嘢 *nei5 zi6gei2 zou6gan2 mat1je5* ‘what you’re doing’ (i.e. an embedded *wh*-question) follows the A-not-A sequence 知唔知 *zi1-m4-zi1* ‘know-not-know’ to yield an A-not-AB form. The A-not-A question in (3) is formed by the disyllabic modal verb 可以 *ho2ji5* ‘can’ with the complement 再挑戰三個 *zoi3 tiu1zin3 saam1 go3* ‘challenge (fight) three more (people)’ to give an a-not-AB form. In (4), the A-not-A question is formed by the disyllabic adjective 方便 *fong1bin6* ‘convenient’ without any object or overt complement as an a-not-A form. The patterns attested in this study can be captured in the modular approach proposed by J. Huang (2010) and R. Huang (2010). The forms of A-not-AB and a-not-AB questions are derived from a full coordinate structure via conjunction reduction to delete the identical complement in a backward direction. For –not-AB form, syllable reduction applies as well to delete the second syllable of the disyllabic verbs (or adjective, or adverb) in the affirmative. When A-not-A and a-not-A questions do not contain any covert complements, conjunction reduction does not apply. However, for a-not-A forms syllable reduction still applies as well to delete the second syllable of the disyllabic verbs (or adjective, or adverb) in a backward direction. Conjunction reduction and syllable reduction both are restricted by directionality constraint.

The attested data show that Cantonese A-not-A questions usually also contain a sentence-final particle whereas most of the A-not-A questions in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles do not contain sentence-final particles. Several different sentence-final particles appear in Cantonese A-not-A question (呀 *aa1*, 呀 *aa3*, 呢 *ni1*, 嚟 *gaa3*, 喇吓 *laa3haa2* and 咁 *aa1naa4*), however, only the sentence-final particle 呀 *ya* appears in A-not-A questions in the Mandarin Chinese data and only the sentence-final particle 呢 *ne* occurs in the Chinese subtitles.

While all four types of A-not-A questions were attested in Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese data, I did also find differences between the versions. For instance, in (5), there are morphological differences, lexical differences and grammatical differences in Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese. For the morphology differences, the adjective ‘suitable’ is composed of the syllables/morphemes 合 *he* and 適 *shi* in the order 合適 *heshi* in Mandarin Chinese (5b) but in written Chinese the order is 適合 *shihe* (5c). For the lexical differences, Cantonese uses the monosyllabic adjective 啱 *ngaam1* to express

‘suitable’ but Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese both use the disyllabic adjective 合適 *heshi* or 適合 *shihe*. For the grammatical difference, the verb phrase 教拳 *gaau3kyun4* ‘teaching martial arts’ comes after the subject 你 *nei5* ‘you’ in Cantonese but follows the A-not-A sequence ‘suitable-not-suitable’ in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese. Then the verb 用 *jung6* ‘use’ is used after the A-not-A sequence ‘suitable-not-suitable’ to refer back to the verb phrase 教拳 *gaau3kyun4* in Cantonese. Because of the lexical differences in the adjective ‘suitable’ and the grammatical differences, the initial A-not-A question in Cantonese takes the A-not-AB form, which is different from the Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese. Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese only differ in the order of the morphemes in the disyllabic predicate, hence their initial A-not-A questions both have the A-not-AB form. Although all versions use the same monosyllabic adjective 夠 *gou* ‘enough’, Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese still have grammatical differences from Cantonese : The verb 用 *yong* ‘use’ occurs in the second A-not-A question to refer back to the topic 教拳 *jiaoquan* ‘teaching fist’ in Mandarin Chinese and written Chinese and hence the second A-not-A question takes the A-not-AB form. But the second A-not-A question in Cantonese just has an A-not-A form.

- (5) a) 睇 吓 你 教 拳 啱 唔 啱 用 喇 吓 ? (Cantonese)
tai2- haa5 nei5 gaau3 kyun4 ngaam1-m4-ngaam1 jung6 laa3 haa2
 look-DEL you teaching fist suitable-not-suitable use SFP SFP

嘩 吓 ! 都 幾 大 吓 喎 , 夠 唔 夠 呢 ?
waa1 haa2 dou1 gei2 daai6-haa5 wo3 gau3-m4-gau3 nei
 wow SFP also quite big-DEL SFP enough-not-enough SFP

- b) 你 看 這裡 合 不 合 適 教 拳 ? (Mandarin)
ni kan zheli he-bu-heshi jiao quan
 youu look here suitable-not-suitable teaching fist

嘩 ! 這裡 真 的 好 大 啊 , 夠 不 夠 用 ?
hua zheli zhen de hao da a gou-bu-gou yong
 wow here really LP very big SFP enough-not-enough use

- c) 你 看 這裡 適不 適合 教 拳 ?
ni kan zheli shi-bu-shihe jiao quan
 you look here suitable-not-suitable teaching fist

(written Chinese)

地方 挺 大 , 夠 不 夠 用 呢 ?
difang ting da gou-bu-gou yong ne
 place very big enough-not-enough use SFP

‘See if it’s suitable for your martial club. It’s pretty spacious. Is it big enough?’

My examination of the pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions in the Cantonese data suggests that A-not-A questions are often used to perform indirect speech acts. They can act as representatives to express the speaker’s assumptions, as expressives to express the speaker’s concern and as directives to make the hearer do something. In (6), the speaker uses the A-not-A question 你識唔識 *nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1* ‘Can you fight’ to indicate that he assumes Ip Man can fight and get confirmation for this. In (7), the speaker uses the A-not-A question 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀 ? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ to express her concern. In (8), the speaker uses the question to encourage the addressee to buy egg tarts when he orders two pieces of cake.

(6) **Representatives – indicating speaker’s assumption:**

... 你 識 唔 識 呀 ?
 ... *nei5 sik1-m4-sik1 aa1*
 ...you know-not-know SFP

‘... Can you fight?’

(7) **Expressives – expressing speaker’s concern:**

今 日 𢦏 唔 𢦏 呀 ?
gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3
 today tired-not-tired SFP

‘Were you tired today?’

(8) **Directives – attempting to get address to do something:**

蛋 撻 要 唔 要 呀 ?
daan6taat1 jiu3-m4-jiu3 aa3
egg tart want-not-want SFP

‘You want an egg tart?’

Moreover, some A-not-A questions can function as gambits. For example, the speaker uses the A-not-A question 今日𢦏唔𢦏呀? *gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3* ‘Were you tired today?’ to start the conversation and encourage the addressee to talk about his day. Tag questions of A-not-A form can also be used to check whether the message is being passed on to the addressee like (10).

(9) **Opening Gambit:**

今 日 𢦏 唔 𢦏 呀 ?
gam1jat6 gui6-m4-gui6 aa3
today tired-not-tired SFP

‘Were you tired today?’

(10) **Communication Control – Do you understand me?**

一 定 要 聽 我 指 揮 , 清 唔 清 楚 ?
jat1ding6 jiu3 teng1 ngo5 zi2fail cing1-m4-cing1co2
definitely need listen I command clear-not-clear

‘You have to follow my instructions at all time, is that clear?’

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for future research

Although the film provides bilingual audios (i.e. Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese) and subtitles (i.e. Chinese and English), there are indications that the Mandarin audio and the subtitles are influenced by the place of the production of the films, which is Hong Kong. So patterns attested in the Mandarin audio and the Chinese subtitles are likely to be closer to Cantonese than standard Chinese. For example, in (11a), the Cantonese speaker usually inserts the pronoun 你 *nei5* ‘you’ in-between the verb 煮飯 *zyu2faan6* ‘cook’ to express ‘cook for you’ but standard Chinese does not allow this. In standard Chinese, the pronoun 你 *ni* ‘you’ needs

to follow a preposition 給 *gei* ‘for’, like in the Mandarin audio (11b). Therefore the Chinese subtitles (11c) are influenced by Cantonese audio.

- (11) a) 咁 仲 使 唔使 煮 你 飯 啊 ? (Cantonese)
gam2 zung2 sai2-m4-sai2 zyu2 nei5 faan6 aa3
 so still need-not-need cook you rice SFP
- b) 那 還 要 不 要 給 你 煮 飯 呀 ? (Mandarin)
na hai yao-bu-yao gei ni zhu fan ya
 so still need-not-need for you cook rice SFP
- c) 那 還 要 不 要 煮 你 飯 ? (Chinese subtitles)
na hai yao-bu-yao zhu ni fan
 so still need-not-need cook you rice

‘Should I cook dinner then?’

In future study I would include films produced in Mainland China and Taiwan as well as Hong Kong productions.

The visual images combined with the sound provide rich contextual information, however, the utterances may not reflect contemporary usage, because the films are set in the past. In future research, I would expand the data sources to include popular radio programmes, radio or TV interviews and spontaneous speech. That would also allow me to examine the influence of topic on the use of A-not-A questions, and may provide further insights on the range of syntactic patterns and pragmatic functions of A-not-A questions in Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese.

References

- Chen, Y. and He, W. (2001). Dui bu dui as a pragmatic marker: Evidence from Chinese classroom discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33:1441-1465.
- Cheng, X.-H. and Tian, X.-L. (2005). 現代漢語 *Xiandai Hanyu* [Modern Chinese]. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co., Ltd.
- Dai, J. X.-L. (1990). Some issues on A-not-A questions in Chinese. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 18(2):285-317.
- Hu, Y.-S. (2003). 現代漢語 (增訂本) *Xiandai Hanyu (Zebgding Ben)* [Modern Chinese (Updated Version)]. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co., Ltd.
- Huang, C.-T. J., Li, Y.-H. A. and Li, Y.-F. (2009). *The Syntax of Chinese*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, J. C.-T. (1988). 漢語正反問句的模組語法 *Hanyu zhengfan wenju de mozu yufa* [A modular theory of A-not-A questions in Chinese]. *中國語文 Zhongguo Yuwen* 204:247-264. [Also in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Sinology*, Taipei: Academia Sinica, pp. 679-704.]
- Huang, J. C.-T. (1998). *Logical Relations in Chinese and the Theory of Grammar*. New York & London: Taylor & Francis.
- Huang, J. C.-T. (2010). Modularity and Chinese A-not-A questions. In Huang, C.-T. J. and Otero, C. (eds.), *Between Syntax and Semantics*. New York: Taylor and Francis, pp. 106-130. [First published (1991) in Georgopoulos, C. and Ishihara, R. (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Linguistics: Essays in Honor of Yuki Kuroda*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 305-332.]
- Huang, R. R.-H. (2010). *Disjunction, Coordination, and Question: A Comparative Study*. Doctoral dissertation. National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.
- Keller, E. (1979). Gambits: Conversational Strategy Signal. *Journal of Pragmatics* 3:219-238.
- Kimps, D., Davidse, K. and Cornillie, B. (2014). A Speech function analysis of tag questions in British English spontaneous dialogue. *Journal of Pragmatics* 66:64-85.
- Kwok, H. (1984). *Sentence Particles in Cantonese*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.
- Law, P. (2006). Adverbs in A-Not-A Questions in Mandarin Chinese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 15(2):97-136
- Ling, W. -J. (2014). How to ask questions in Mandarin Chinese. *CUNY Academic Works*. Retrieved 23rd March 2016, from http://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/445
- Lü, S.-X. (1985). 疑問、否定、肯定 *Yiwen, Founding, Kending* (Questioning, Negation, Affirmation). *中國語文 Zhongguo Yuwen* 4:241-250.

- Matthews, S. and Yip, V. (2011). *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. R. (1976). A Classification of Illocutionary Acts. *Language in Society* 5(1):1-23.
- Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shao, J.-M. (1996). 現代漢語疑問句研究 *Xiandai Hanyu yiwenju yanjiu* [Study on interrogative questions in Modern Chinese]. Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe.
- Shao, J.-M., Zhou, J., Peng, X.-C., Shao, Y., Gan, Y.-E. and Ceng, Y.-P. (2010). 漢語方言疑問範疇比較研究 *Hanyu fangyan yiwen fanchou bijiao yanjiu* [Comparative Study of Chinese Dialect Interrogative Question Category]. Guangzhou: Jinan daxue chubanshe.
- Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance Communication and Cognition Second Edition*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Wang, W. S. Y. (1967). Conjoining and deletion in Mandarin Syntax. *Monumenta Serica* 26:224-236.
- Wu, Z.-G. (1992). 現代漢語選擇問句的刪除規則 *Xiandai Hanyu xuanze wenju de shanchu guize* [Deletion rules in Modern Chinese alternative questions]. 華中師範大學學報 *Huazhong Shifan Daxue Xuebao* [Journal of Huazhong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)] 5:79-83.
- Yin, S.-L., (2009). 現代漢語反問句研究 *Xiandai Hanyu Fanwenju Yanjiu* [Study on Rhetorical Questions in Modern Chinese]. Haerbin: Heilongjiang daxue chubanshe.